Your Excellency the Australian Ambassador to Greece Ms Kate Logan, Chief Justice Susan Kiefel AC, Justice Anthe Philippides, Deputy Mayors Mr Teris Hatziyioannou, and Mrs Mariza Hatzilazarou, Distinguished Guests, Chief Justices, Patrons of the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association, Your Honours, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On 11 April 2014, the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association was launched in the Library of the Supreme Court of Victoria by Chief Justice Kourakis, Chief Justice of South Australia and both the South Australian and National Patron of the Association. The Association was privileged to have the then Victorian Chief Justice Marilyn Warren AC speak at the launch.

Since that time, the Association has become a truly National Organisation with Chapters now established in all the eight States and Territories of Australia.

The progress of the Association is evident from the following timeline and launches:

- on 31 October 2014, the Governor of South Australia launched the South Australian Chapter;
- on 30 January 2015, Chief Justice Robert French AC, the then Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, launched the Queensland Chapter;
- Chief Justice Riley, the then Chief Justice of the Northern Territory launched the Northern Territory Chapter on 9 October 2015;
- on 27 November 2015, Chief Justice Blow AO launched the Tasmanian Chapter;
- the Western Australian Chapter was launched by Chief Justice Wayne Martin AC on 12 February 2016;
- on 15 April 2016, the Australian Capital Territory Chapter was launched by Chief Justice Helen Murrell;
• the New South Wales Chapter was launched by Chief Justice Tom Bathurst AC on 11 November 2016.

The Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association has already hosted high level educational events as is evident from the Association’s website.

Earlier this year, the Tasmanian Chapter hosted a very successful Oration delivered by Chief Justice Kourakis.

In the next four months we are excited to be hosting the following Orations by eminent jurists:

• NSW Chapter Oration by Justice Stephen Gageler AC of the High Court of Australia;
• the John Perry SA Chapter Oration by Justice Pat Keane AC of the High Court of Australia;
• NT Chapter Oration by Chief Justice Michael Grant, Chief Justice of the Northern Territory;
• the Robert French AC WA Chapter Oration by Justice James Edelman of the High Court of Australia;
• the Alexander Freeleagus Oration by Justice Walter Sofronoff, President of the Queensland Court of Appeal;
• the Victorian Chapter Oration by Justice Chris Maxwell AC, President of the Victorian Court of Appeal;
• the ACT Chapter Oration by Justice Chrissa Loukas-Karlsson, Supreme Court of the ACT.

The purposes of HAL, as apparent from the Constitution of the Association, include not only to provide continuing legal education and the exchange of legal information, but also, amongst other purposes:

• to establish links between lawyers anywhere in the world, irrespective of whether they are of Hellenic background, who have an interest in Hellenic law, philosophy and culture, in furtherance of advancing diversity, law or jurisprudence for the public benefit;
in the educational arena, to further the knowledge of Greek law and European law, both formally and informally, to hold conferences and seminars on issues of law and business and on topics of relevance between Australia and Greece;

to address problems and assist in providing solutions to Greek-Australians in Australia in assessing their legal rights in Greece.

The hosting of this International Legal Conference is not only reflective of the maturity of the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association, but, fundamentally, necessary in fulfilling its purposes mandated by its Constitution.

As observed by Chief Justice Robert French AC in the launch of the Queensland Chapter, the formation and strength of the Association is an encouraging sign of the energy of the Hellenic legal community and the capacity that it has to contribute in a positive way to society.

The Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association is very mindful of the need to positively contribute to society. We have sought to do so by not only hosting high level educational events throughout Australia, but now in Greece, in accordance with the Association’s Rules. In addition, we have instituted a mentoring program. Although most of the mentors are of Hellenic background, a significant proportion of mentees are not of Hellenic origin. We have organised fundraising events and will continue to be actively involved in assisting, on a voluntary and pro bono basis, members of the community and organisations, not just of Hellenic origin.

I thank the Committee of HAL and in particular the Conference Committee of Maria Barbayannis, Elefteria Konstantinou, Steven Stevens and Joseph Tsalanidis for their considerable efforts and support in organising the Conference.

I acknowledge the efforts of Justice Philippides as Conference Program Chair for putting together, in the context of the Conference theme, such a broad range of fascinating topics.

I also wish to recognise the generosity of the Conference Sponsors, as recorded in the Conference Program, in ensuring the Conference will be memorable and successful.
It would be remiss if thanks were not extended to the team from Pulse Travel for their professionalism as Conference Manager and their willingness to be present at the Conference to assist.

We are privileged to have speakers, delegates and distinguished guests from not only Australia attending the Conference, but also:

- Canada;
- Cyprus;
- Greece;
- Hong Kong;
- New Zealand;
- Papua New Guinea;
- United Kingdom; and
- United States of America.

To all in attendance, on behalf of the Association, I extend my gratitude.

Our appreciation is extended particularly to our speakers, led by Chief Justice Susan Kiefel AC as the Keynote Speaker, for their considerable efforts in preparing what will be insightful presentations, as well as the Session Chairs.

I also wish to thank again for their support and assistance the Municipality of Rhodes, without which the conference could not be a success.

It would be remiss if I did not thank the management of Sheraton Rhodes Resort that have offered me every assistance.

I trust you will enjoy the Conference, become a member of HAL if you have not, and experience Hellenic hospitality and Filotimo. As Philosopher Thales of Miletus said: "Filotimo to the Greeks is like breathing; a Greek isn't Greek without it". It is a privilege to have you in attendance at what I anticipate will be a unique and high quality International Legal Conference.

The Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association officially extends a warm welcome to all.

Kalos Orisate