Your Excellency, the President of the Hellenic Republic, Mr Prokopios Pavlopoulos, it is an exceptional privilege to have Your Excellency officially open the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association International Conference.

We are mindful and appreciative that Your Excellency has re-arranged your exceptionally busy schedule to fly into Rhodes today to open the international conference. It is particularly fitting that such a respected Professor of Public Law and eminent lawyer opens this historic event.

His Excellency was born in 1950 in the beautiful area of Kalamata, Greece. Having graduated with distinction from the Athens Law School in 1973, he undertook postgraduate studies in Paris.

In 1974 he obtained a Master of Advanced Studies in Public Law from the University of Paris II and in 1977 he obtained his PhD with distinction.

In 1982 he started his academic career at the University of Athens Law School being appointed a Professor in 1989.

In addition, Mr Pavlopoulos taught and conducted research as a visiting Professor at Paris II University.

Mr Pavlopoulos was also a very active politician. From 2000 to 2014, he was elected to Parliament representing the constituency of Central Athens. During his terms in Parliament, he served as both a Deputy Minister and Minister.

On 18 February 2015 Mr Pavlopoulos was elected President of the Hellenic Republic.
The President is very well known and respected in Australia.

Many Greeks now living in Australia watch the Greek News beamed daily into their homes throughout Australia. They speak very highly of the President. We hope His Excellency will be visiting Australia in the near future.

We also recognise Your Excellency, the Australian Ambassador to Greece, Ms Kate Logan, the Governor of the South Aegean Region, Mr George Hatzimarkos, the Mayor of Rhodes, Mr Fotis Chatzidiakos, Chief Justice Chris Kourakis, National Patron of the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association, our many Distinguished Guests, Chief Justice Susan Kiefel AC, Keynote Speaker at the Conference, Chief Justices, Patrons of the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association, Your Honours, Colleagues.

On behalf of the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association, and in my capacity as National President of HAL and of proud Rhodian descent, it is a great privilege to chair the opening of this historic conference hosted by the Association in the magnificent Bastion of the Grand Master's Palace.

I wish to thank the speakers for agreeing to address us and all for attending.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayors of Rhodes have been very positive and supportive of the hosting by the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association of this International Conference. We thank the Municipality for granting permission, together with the Ministry of Culture, for the opening to be held at the site of the 2017 winner of the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage in the Category of Conservation.

It is my pleasure to introduce the Mayor of Rhodes Mr Fotis Chatzidiakos. The Mayor has degrees in both law and political science, as well as a postgraduate degree from the Department of Mediterranean Studies.

Mr Chatzidiakos worked as a lawyer from 1983 and was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of Greece.

The Mayor has a long history of active involvement in the community throughout the Aegean Region, serving on many not for profit boards and associations.

Please welcome the Mayor of Rhodes.
INTRODUCTION OF H.E. MS KATE LOGAN

We are delighted that Her Excellency, the Australian Ambassador to Greece, Ms Kate Logan, kindly accepted an invitation to speak this evening.

Ms Logan holds a Bachelor of Laws (with honours, majoring in international law) and a Bachelor of Arts (with honours) from the University of Melbourne, as well as a Graduate Diploma in Foreign Affairs and Trade from the Australian National University.

The Ambassador is a Senior Career Officer with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Those conference delegates from Papua New Guinea would be particularly interested in the fact that Ms Logan was Assistant Secretary of Papua New Guinea and Fiji Branch between 2012 and 2016.

The Australian Ambassador will speak on “The Enduring Australian and Greek Bilateral Relationship”.

The Ambassador will now address us.

INTRODUCTION OF THE GOVERNOR MR GEORGE HATZIMARKOS

It is my privilege to invite Mr George Hatzimarkos, Governor of the Region of the South Aegean to extend an official welcome to delegates.

Mr. Chatzimarkos, was born in Rhodes. In 1997 he commenced involvement in community politics. He held various elected positions from that time until May 2014. In that year he was elected Governor of South Aegean. From the end of May 2016 to May 2017 he was the President of the Conference of the Peripheral Maritime Regions which is a think tank and interest organization for European regions. The organization has 160 member regions in 28 countries. I invite the Governor to welcome delegates.
INVITATION TO HIS EXCELLENCY TO OFFICIALLY OPEN THE CONFERENCE

It is now my privilege to invite His Excellency to officially open the conference.

INTRODUCTION OF CHIEF JUSTICE CHRIS KOURAKIS

It is my pleasure to introduce Chief Justice Kourakis. Chief Justice Kourakis is the National Patron of the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association.

His Honour will be introduced in more detail when he speaks later this week. His Honour was called to the Bar in 1989; appointed Senior Counsel in 1997; served as the President of the South Australian Law Society; appointed Solicitor-General of South Australia; appointed a Judge in 2008 and Chief Justice of South Australia in 2012.

It is my privilege to welcome the enthusiastic National Patron of the Hellenic Australian Lawyers Association to speak.