

**Adress for the National Day  
14 juillet 2013 – La Pérouse**

Mr Parliamentary Secretary for Transport and Roads,  
Honourable members of the Parliament,  
Dear Members of the Randwick Council and the council of Hurtsville  
Excellencies and Dear Colleagues Consul-general,  
Dear Presidents of Associations,  
Dear members of the Assemblée des français de l'Etranger  
Dear Friends,

I am sorry for my fellow citizens but I will speak in English ; sorry also for my terrible French accent (but I am working on it !)...

Thank you very much to Sylvie Humphries and the Salt String quartet for these very moving anthems ! I wish to thank also very much again the “Brigade française” for the impressive display of guns and muskets, which remind me your very lively re-enactment of Napoleonic battle a few months ago in Lithgow.

As you may know, the Bastille day in France is overshadowed by the terrible train crash which occurred Friday in Brétigny sur Orge in France, which caused the death of six persons and wounded eight very seriously. This accident has plunged France in the mourning at the eve of the National day, and we wish to convey to the victims and their families our deepest thoughts and sympathy. We have had a thought for them in our ceremony at the monument Lapérouse a little earlier.

Every seven year, arrives a terrible thing : the Bastille day falls on a Sunday. We have therefore the choice between organizing the reception another day, but in France, the Bastille day is sacred and normally, it is strictly forbidden to chose another day whatever the reason, or chose to organise something that day, with the risk to have few people. We figured that as long as we bother you with a reception on a Sunday, we should bring you in a beautiful and interesting place and indeed, La Pérouse is a wonderful place to discover. I know that among you, some people have never been here and they will be happy to have discovered this beautiful site.

La Pérouse is an historic place, very important for Australia and a keystone for the french-australian relations... You know that it is in this bay of Botany that James Cook arrived in 1770 and it is in this very place that the First fleet of Captain Philp landed on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 1788, a few days before the arrival,

on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, of the two ships of the Comte de Lapérouse, La Boussole and l'Astrolabe.

This place saw the friendly encounter between the two great sailors. This place saw also the first encounter between the French and the Aboriginal inhabitants of this region, that Lapérouse wanted so much to know and understand better.

If you look today at the Frenchman's bay, just beside the museum, you can imagine easily the landscape that Captain Philip and Lapérouse discovered in 1788, since few things have changed since that time on this beach... I am very pleased and honoured to retie this long tradition today and for some of you, make you discover this lovely place and beautiful museum. You can visit it freely this afternoon and do not miss this opportunity if you have not done it before.

I wish specially to draw your attention on a new piece which was given to the museum by the Randwick Council just a few weeks ago, on the initiative of the association of Friends of Lapérouse : it is a bronze copy of the eucalyptus trunk which marked the grave of Father Receveur, chaplain of the expedition Lapérouse. The place of the grave was firstly marked by the French and later, by the British soldiers of Captain Philip. When it got lost, twenty years later, it was an aboriginal man who showed the place to Captain Duperrey, who carved the tree of eucalyptus marking the grave, which is now in the maritime museum in Paris. It is a foundry of Albi, the native town of Lapérouse, which casted this bronze, on the instruction of the Laperouse association of Albi. It is therefore a wonderful chain of solidarity which allows us to have this beautiful piece today here. It is such solidarity that this place can create and it is the reason why I love it.

The month of July is marked in France by the Tour de France and the Bastille Day. I am very happy to see how these two events are also very present in Australia and specially in Sydney. We have been celebrating the Bastille Day since Friday in many places : in Custom House with the festival Bleu Blanc Rouge, in the Argyle yesterday with the French associations and today in Lapérouse. I am pleased to see also that the Tour de France is almost as popular here that the AFL or the Rugby league, keeping all Australia on the toes...Thanks to Canalsat Australie, we will have some glimpses of the last stages of the Tour. I wish great success to the Australian cyclists for the last stages !

We are entering very important years for the bilateral relations between France and Australia, with the commemorations of the centenary of the first World War, next year. The International Fleet Review next October in Sydney will give us a first sight of these commemorations. 2014 will be also the year of the

presidency of the G20 by Australia. On this occasion, the French president will visit Australia and it will give to all Australian the testimony of the importance and quality of the bonds of friendship which unify both countries.

The very successful visit of a delegation of the European-Australian business council last month in France, led by the Governor General Quentin Bryce, showed the dynamism of the economic exchanges between France and Australia, this country being the 7<sup>th</sup> most important commercial surplus of France. All major French companies are present in Sydney and are proud to contribute to the economy of the New South Wales.

I do not want to finish my speech without thanking warmly all the Friends of France who have helped us to organise this Bastille Day and specially all our sponsors which made it possible. I will specially thank the Randwick Council, which helped us for the marquee and the National Park and wild life department which allowed us to settle on the beautiful lawns...

Among all the French companies which help us, let me draw your attention on Citroën, one of our main sponsors. We are lucky enough to have outside the “2 chevaux” Citroën, a legendary car in France and internationally. I have no doubt that this car went around Australia as did earlier the 5cv “little lemon” because it was yellow (but it was not a lemon !).

I wish also to thank warmly all the team of the consulate and specially my assistant Muriel, and all volunteers who helped us today.

I wish to all of you a beautiful Bastille Day and please enjoy the good food and the good wine ! You know that the French national day, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July, does not refer directly to the storming of the Bastille jail, on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 1789, but to the Federation Festival, on the 14th of July 1790, on the first anniversary of the Bastille storming. This date marks a time of joy and reconciliation between all French, royalists or Republicans, with the presence of the king. I wish that we enjoy together today this feeling of friendship and unity, together.

Vive l’Australie et vive la France !