

INTRODUCING THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE MS SAM MOSTYN AC



Her Excellency the Honourable Ms Sam Mostyn AC was sworn in as Australia's 28th Governor-General on 1 July 2024.

A businesswoman and community leader, Ms Mostyn is known for her exceptional service to the Australian community. She has a long history in executive and governance roles across diverse sectors including business, sport, climate change, the arts, policy and not-for-profit.

In 2024, Ms Mostyn was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia for eminent service in the social justice, gender equity, sporting, cultural and business sectors, to reconciliation, and to environmental sustainability. She had previously been appointed an Officer of the Order in 2021.

For her continued contribution as an advocate for gender inclusion and equality, sustainability, and climate change action, Ms Mostyn was awarded the 2020 United Nations Day Honour Award and an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from the Australian National University in 2018.

She was a Commissioner with the Australian Football League for over a decade until 2017 and has been a strong supporter of women in sport. She was an advocate for the creation of the AFL Women's league and co-founded the Minerva Network, Australia's only mentorship and development programme dedicated to professional female athletes.

Ms Mostyn is married to Mr Simeon Beckett SC and they have an adult daughter, Lotte Beckett. Ms Mostyn is an avid Sydney Swans fan and served on the board from 2017–2024.

In her acceptance speech at her swearing-in, the Governor-General said (edited extracts), "Sitting here today, alongside

parliamentary, business and sports people, are community workers, carers, youth employment advisers, family and domestic violence specialists, allied health experts, organisers of sporting clubs and networks, as well as volunteers, and students and representatives of communities, charities and care organisations from across the country.

These people are at the heart of our communities and our country. I have had the great privilege of working with and learning from all of you over the years and know that you encapsulate the very best of Australian values...

I stand here now as Australia's 28th Governor-General, immensely conscious of this great honour and privilege. I warmly thank the Prime Minister for inviting me to serve. And I thank His Majesty The King for appointing me.

When announcing my appointment, [the Prime Minister] said he sought a modern, optimistic Governor-General, capable of uniting and celebrating the very best of Australia. In the past few months since accepting the position, I have reflected deeply on these words.

I have had to ask myself several questions about the role and impact of the office of Governor-General in 2024. I decided there was only one way to answer these questions: to get on the road and listen to people; to listen carefully to those with unique experiences and insights.

My first priority was to meet with all five living former Governors-General, including my immediate predecessor, General David Hurley. I congratulate and thank General and Mrs Hurley for their very fine service to our country over so many years.

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In addition to standing with Australians in the aftermath of natural disasters, they performed their duties during the difficult Covid years. Simeon and I wish them the very best for their years ahead and thank them for their warm and gracious welcome to Government House.

It was a rare and special privilege for me to meet all former Governors-General. All showed me great kindness and encouragement, and shared their wise advice, drawing on so much of the history of Australia over recent decades.

In particular, I thank Dame Quentin Bryce, our country's first woman Governor-General. Her quiet dignity, experience and thoughtful counsel remain vital for me to understand, as only the second woman to serve in this Office...

In late May, I spent time with His Majesty King Charles at Buckingham Palace. I took the opportunity in that private meeting to pass on the best wishes of Australians for his and the Princess of Wales' health.

I am not the first Australian to be struck by the interest and warmth The King feels for this country where he lived and studied as a young man.

In recent months I also spent time in our cities, in our regions and in the country. People from businesses small and large, civil society, philanthropy, frontline services and community organisations, as well as our scientific, sports, arts and cultural sectors.

And every day, I met impressive Australians who do not hold high office, or any office.

I listened to them in airports, in shopping centres, on the boundaries of sports grounds, in theatre foyers and galleries, and often just on the street.

Women and men and often children stopped me regularly to talk about this country that they love. Across a wide range of backgrounds, life experiences and opinions, all of them wished for a brighter future for Australia. And a desire for unity and optimism — a renewed sense of national possibility — in building that future together.

It struck me that the former Governors-General whom I met expressed the same desires for our country, in almost the same words as everyday Australians.

They also reminded me that the role of Governor-General is not simply to be an observer of Australian life but to be a participant. To reflect the Australian character and its fundamentally democratic spirit...

Everyone I spoke with, from former Prime Ministers to people in the street, proudly described our country as confident and successful. Yet, in 2024, it is true that contemporary challenges are placing strains on that confidence...

Yet, despite all these challenges, I will always feel tremendous optimism for Australia.

I often reflect on the words of Cape York leader Noel Pearson. His three-part portrait of our nation frames who we are.

In his words:

- Our Indigenous foundation of 65,000 years.
- Our British institutions.
- And our remarkable multicultural present and future.

Noel's words capture so much of what is mighty about this country: the things we should celebrate, be thankful for, and fight to strengthen. A country with extraordinary advantages of geography and resources, and the generous sharing of the oldest continuing culture in the world. A country that since the end of World War Two — in less time than an average life span — has welcomed 7.5 million migrants including 950,000 refugees to our country...

Care has a deep and resonant place in our Australian identity. Care is the gentle thought and the outstretched hand that Australians have always been ready to share when great challenges present themselves. Care is the quieter, better part of ourselves. And it is that sense of care that Simeon and I will seek to depict and amplify as we take on this role...

I will be an optimistic, modern and visible Governor-General, committed to the service and contribution that all Australians expect and deserve from the holder of this Office.

Ahead of her time, Dame Quentin Bryce described the role of the Office "as striking a balance between observing traditions and protocol and being thoroughly contemporary". I will remain alive to changing expectations and needs, whilst holding fast to respect for the role and its place in our peaceful democracy.

I believe that our democracy is the golden thread that unites Australians across this vast continent and down the generations.

I am keen to begin the work of professionally and conscientiously discharging my executive and constitutional responsibilities: Presiding over meetings of the Executive Council. leading and administering our honours and awards system. And when called upon, to be Australia's representative in international engagements.

Most of all, Simeon and I look forward to engaging with Australians, in the many places we will visit. As long as I hold this post, I will do my utmost to reflect your hopes and aspirations. To stand with you in tough times, and to celebrate your victories, great and small. To listen to you, to learn from you, and as Sir William Deane might have said, to walk with you.

We can be optimistic, confident and proud as we build our extraordinary nation's future together."