

LAUNCH OF 'CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY' PUBLICATION

**TONY HOWARTH AO, PRESIDENT AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

**Hyatt Hotel, Canberra
Thursday 4 December 2008**

Members and guests,

As your current President, allow me to firstly join with David and express my absolute pleasure at seeing many of our former Presidents and colleagues here today, in the presence of our current Board, Council members, executives and staff.

I congratulate Peter Hendy in conceiving this work, and researching and editing the publication. Peter, it is an impressive publication and you have captured an important part of our history and done so with a most interesting and matter of fact narrative.

I also thank Melbourne University Publishing and the Australian Dictionary of Biography for their assistance and co-operation.

This is a publication with multiple uses. It is not only a historical record of biographies. It is also a record about our origins. It tells us something deeper about our organisation, about the multiple cultures and traditions we inherit and of which we are today the stewards.

It highlights just how prominent business leaders from our network have been in the affairs of business and government, and in the household names and brands we have come to know – from Holden, to Simpson, to Seppelt, to Drake-Brockman, to Kitchen, to Wollstonecraft and to Coles.

As former Prime Minister John Howard says in his foreword to the book, these are people that interacted with Prime Ministers and Cabinets, and who expressed their views in the best interests of the wider Australian community.

Peter Hendy reminds us in his commentary that we are the amalgamation of three organisations that were formed around the time of federation, the Associated Chambers of Commerce, the Federal Council of Chambers of Manufacturers, and the Central Council of Employers. More than a century of direct lineage is indeed a rich history.

That Peter has been able to trace our history back to the formation of the Sydney Chamber of Commerce in 1826 is quite remarkable. In that sense it is a publication about the role of business in nation building during our colonial days and federation years, and the way in which these major players have shaped Australia as it is today.

I am particularly pleased that we launch this publication at the very time our organisation is adopting a Strategic Framework for our work in future years.

The theme of the past two days, *'a proud past, a confident future'* is a powerful and accurate juxtaposition.

Armed with this history, we have the confidence to move forward.

Aside from launching our publication, I have another pleasant duty. I am pleased to announce that the redeveloped board-room in our secretariat will be named after two of our guests here today, Mr. George Polites and Mr. Bryan Noakes. Between them they have a combined 66 years of direct service to our network. From today, the board-room will be known as the Polites-Noakes Room. I congratulate both George and Bryan on this recognition. The naming plaque is here for inspection as you leave. It will be affixed to the board-room following this event.

So with those few words, and on behalf of all of our Past Presidents including those assembled here today, I now invite Past Presidents Graham Byrne and Ross Berglund to join with me on the stage in officially launching the publication.

Graham Byrne was the last President of the Australian Chamber of Commerce between 1991 and 1992. He was the President of the State Chamber of Commerce New South Wales between 1988 and 1990. He was also managing director of Sheffield Byrne Holdings Pty. Ltd.

Ross Berglund AM was President of the Confederation of Australian Industry between 1989 and 1991. He is a former President of the Employers Federation of NSW. He was chairman of Nationwide Realty, East Coast Pty. Ltd.

We hereby launch the publication "Captains of Industry: Biographies of the Presidents of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry".