

## Ross Garnaut speech at *Robert James Lee Hawke's State Memorial Service*, 14 June 2019, Sydney Opera House

THANKS BLANCHE, SUE AND THE HAWKE FAMILY.

Bob Hawke, Australia's greatest Prime Minister, leaves an incomparable legacy

a modern nation,

more prosperous,

more fully enmeshed in its dynamic and assertive region,

still enjoying the benefits - economic, social and environmental - of visionary hard-fought reform.

This achievement of national interest prevailing over vested interests seems unattainable in 2019. What made it possible then?

That is a story of leadership with many parts -

public education on the imperative of change;

long-time perspectives on policy and sustained gradual movement towards objectives

disciplined management of government and public policy;

and a social democratic policy framework that gave ordinary Australians confidence they would not be stranded by change.

Bob Hawke shared many of the values, interests, enthusiasms and weaknesses of his fellow citizens.

His democratic confidence was crucial to sustained support across the Australian community.

"Knowledge is Power" is the motto of Perth Modern School, Bob Hawke's old school and mine.

Just before we sat down this morning, the Premier of WA asked me to tell you that a new Bob Hawke College is soon to be opened alongside our old school.

Knowledge is Power.

Hawke understood that widely shared knowledge was the foundation of a successful democracy:

his National Economic Summit was all about educating us on our critical problems and the changes necessary to overcome them;

speeches at home and abroad were, from the start, exercises in public education about outward-looking change, reorientation, the advantages of open trade.

Hawke said we should be the clever country, built on our brains and knowledge.

One of his proudest achievements was a transformational increase in the numbers of Australian schoolchildren completing Year 12.

He implemented the policies through which Australia became a leading place of learning for international students.

He was an Australian social democrat at home in every international context -

Chinese leaders engaging with him late into the night in Nanjing, Chengdu and Perth about the reforms transforming China, with an intimacy that had no parallel.

Making sure through his close friend Secretary for State George Shultz that the US was never surprised by what we were doing in China.;

Nelson Mandela attributing a crucial role to his global financial sanctions;

using his high personal standing to draw together the leaders of the Asia Pacific to form APEC.

Bob Hawke had one of the most analytically strong, retentive and well-disciplined minds with which I have interacted in a lifetime of working with clever people.

His focus and stamina enabled productive work with staff, ministers, public servants and the people.

He had always read in good time a paper prepared for him. Usually overnight.

He respected the Public Service as a rich resource of knowledge, experience and analytic capacity

He was the purposeful leader of a Ministry of unequalled talent, ensuring prominence for Bill Hayden and his supporters, setting priorities for reform, letting Ministers get on with the job, and talking things through face to face when they did not go to plan.

We in his office loved going to work.

Our interactions could be shocking in their honesty.

Hawke expected to be told, forcefully, if any of us thought a Government position or Prime Ministerial idea was unsound.

And he took full personal responsibility for a position based on advice when political gales blew against it.

Bob Hawke showed us how good democratic government can be.

Amidst the daunting contemporary realities, his life as Prime Minister gives hope for a democratic future with broadly shared prosperity, for our country and for humanity.

Ross Garnaut  
17 May 2019