

CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY ALBERT HALL

Welcome to all of you joining the *democratic* family of the Commonwealth of Australia and becoming citizens of Canberra this unique capital city
And Welcome to you all *gathering* in this iconic building a symbol of the vigorous contribution of the people of Canberra in the civic life of the Australian capital.

Having been asked to speak to you on this occasion was a great honour and a reminder of the pledge that I made many years ago to this nation and to this city.

Becoming a citizen for me represented and still represents a pledge of belonging, a contract of acceptance of duty and of rights.

A pledge loaded with an immense and complex emotional decision intruding into the lives of parents, brothers and sisters, children friends and traditions. To paraphrase JFK "citizen's *ideal should be about what one can give to a country more than what one can expect to gain from it.*"

In welcoming you as imminent Australian citizens I will like to make two requests.

These requests are the promise that I pledged to uphold forty years ago when I with my wife Francesca embraced Australia as our family's new home.

The first is that you should always be proud to share the gift of your ancestral culture It is a marvellous gift that will enrich us all.

The second a prayer,

whilst you are here in this unique capital city ' cherish the momentous event that is taking place in this building, accept and uphold the dreams and the heritage value of these two places, the Albert Hall and Canberra.

They now belong to you also and they need your love to keep blossoming now and in the future.

With your help and support this Hall that hosted the first Australian citizenship ceremony many years ago now will continue to be more and more significant during our life and in the memories and life of our children and their children.

And Canberra, our Australian capital with your constant democratic alertness and my dreams of an invisible city in the landscape, could grow to become the only liveable city to be found in this self destroying world of polluted megacities.

I am sure that the honourable minister Christopher Evans, Senator Gary Humphries and the member for Canberra Ms Annette Ellis will forgive my choice of language if I conclude by saying that with the decision you have taken today in this historic building 'SHE-LL BE APPLES'

A prosperous future to you, happy birthday to this Hall and thankyou.

Enrico Taglietti
10.03.08