



New South Wales
Council for
Civil Liberties

NSWCCL ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DINNER 2015

Celebrating 53 years of civil liberties advocacy

Honourable guests

I acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. In view of recent events, I wish to say that it is necessary that we not only make this acknowledgment, but also that we mean it. It is not only ceremonial, but indicative of our recognition that respect is due.

Next, I would like to pay my respects to all of you here tonight. The largest CCL function in many years – and it is energising to have such a great crowd. Of course, I recognise that you are all here mainly to listen to Prof Gillian Triggs, but in coming tonight you are showing your support for the Council for Civil Liberties and the work that we do.

There is a wide variety of you here tonight. We are honoured to have 2 NSW Senators – Senator Rhiannon and Senator McAllister, and NSW MP Tamara Smith, recently elected member for Ballina and NSW MLC and former CCL committee member Shayne Mallard. I am not sure if have any sitting judges, but we certainly have a number of retired judges, and also a table of judges associates – perhaps they are the most influential! We have tables from at least 3 of the main political parties – Labor, Liberal and Greens, and lots of tables of lawyers. We are particularly pleased to have a table of honoured guests from Affinity (Iftar dinner at NSW parl house), and I sincerely hope that we can deepen the connections between civil liberties and the Muslim community. We have the Presidents of CCLs in Queensland and South Australia with us tonight. And I think we have a significant proportion of the population of Glebe – under the banner, friends of Lesley Lynch.

Welcome to all of you, and I hope that you find this evening's event worthwhile.

Welcome especially to Gillian Triggs, we are very honoured to have you address us tonight.

This night is a fundraiser for the NSW Council for Civil Liberties, and I ask that you keep that in mind throughout the evening as you will be asked in various ways to show your support. Please do so generously.

For those of you who don't know the CCL well, I could talk to you for some time about what we do. But I have only 1 or 2 minutes left. I will mention some of the areas in which we have played an active part over the last year or so:

- counter-terrorism legislation 3 tranches (foreign fighters, ASIO powers, meta-data retention)
- surveillance
- chilling free speech (including anti-FOI measures)
- hiding people (offshore detention, remote detention)
- indefinite detention on ASIO assessment
- citizenship renouncement and stripping
- disproportionate (mandatory minimum) sentencing
- restricting access to justice (non-reviewable discretionary decisions, funding cuts, Court fees)
- unrepresentative Senate, minority parties and independents denied participation in PJCIS,
- unpopularity of democracy

And that's just a few. Each of these issues eats away at our democracy, and makes it more fragile. The price of freedom and democracy is eternal vigilance. The CCL is proudly part of that vigilance.

Have a great night!