



New South Wales
Council for
Civil Liberties

NSWCCL ANNUAL FUNDRAISING DINNER 2015

Celebrating 54 years of civil liberties advocacy

Honourable guests

I acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation.

It is great to see you all here tonight – and a wonderful collection of people you are too. CCL Life members Michael Kirby and Cameron Murphy.

Michael Kirby has a very long association with civil liberties – CCL's second newsletter in 1964 has a reference to Michael assisting the students who were arrested at a demonstration outside the US Consulate.

Current and former senators and members of the Australian Parliament and NSW Parliament Meredith Burgman, Lee Rhiannon, David Shoebridge.

Current or former judges of the High Court of Australia, Federal Court and Supreme Court of NSW (including Paul Stein, Hal Sperling, David Kirby – Michael Kirby falls into multiple categories).

Senior counsel – Michael Hall, Chrissa Loukas, Philip Boulten, David Bennett, Nick Cowdery and our special guest tonight Bret Walker. Osman Faruqi – young journalist suing Mark Latham for defamation.

I'd like to mention the table of Affinity Intercultural Foundation, strong supporters of civil liberties here and in Turkey – where a vicious purge is underway!

We are very honoured to have Bret Walker SC address us tonight.

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

The past year has struck some deep civil liberties chords:

- *Counter-terrorism*
- *Indigenous recognition*
- *Human rights abuses – Nauru, Manus Island, NT youth detention*
- *Prospective detention / administrative detention*
- *Citizenship qualifications for Australian parliament*
- *Privacy*
- *Foreign interference with domestic polity (China, Russia, Turkey) and foreign donations*
- *Successes – Tasmanian anti-protest laws struck down, NSW laws will inevitably follow, marriage equality*

Next year -

- *Religious freedom and discrimination – a stalking horse for more general human rights legislation?*

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.

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.

And you will find membership forms on your table- I invite you to consider joining NSWCCCL.

Have a great night!

Stephen Blanks
President
NSWCCCL