

Parliamentary Library Research Paper 1

Scott Bennett - Parliament and the People

This essay has been written to mark the twentieth anniversary of Australia's Parliament House, opened by Queen Elizabeth II on 9 May 1988. It has as its focus the relationship of Parliament House with the Australian people.

Aspects of this relationship that are discussed here include: the official aspects of the building, including the passage of legislation, the committee work, the official recognition that is given to many matters, Parliament House as a showplace for a striking collection of art and craftwork, the use of Parliament House as a location for remembrance and celebration, the practice of 'coming to Canberra' to publicise issues of national and international importance, Parliament House as a site for public protest, and the relationship between indigenous Australians and the building. The paper concludes with a discussion of the threats to public access that have emerged over time, and the hope of many Australians that their relatively free access to the building is never lost.

<http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/2007-08/08rp29.pdf>