



## LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**MESSAGE FROM THE LEADER OF THE FEDERAL OPPOSITION, THE  
HON KIM C BEAZLEY MP**

### **Launch of The Henry Parkes Foundation**

I congratulate you on the launch of this worthy and timely initiative.

Your stated aim – *to promote among all Australians an understanding of and engagement with Australia's constitutional structures and political systems* – is noble and worth pursuing, given the historically low esteem in which our politicians and political institutions are generally held today.

The success of the Henry Parkes Foundation will do much to restore politics in this country to a position of respect and aspiration, not derision.

Henry Parkes, the man who said in 1851, '*our object is the social and political elevation of the working classes*', is an appropriate figurehead for the Foundation and its aims. His dedication to Federation and the Constitution has special resonance today.

We are once again experiencing a time of need for constitutional reform. Now is the time for the Australian people to take up the mantle of Henry Parkes and push for a most important element of constitutional reform for our nation – the matter of Australia becoming a Republic.

I am sure as the centenary of Federation celebrations gain momentum around the country, so too will the public's enthusiasm for the Australian Republic – and I think Henry Parkes would look upon this move as sensible constitutional reform in the national interest.

I wish you every success with the Henry Parkes Foundation and look forward to seeing the fruits of your hard work with greater appreciation of and respect for Australia's political systems from future generations of Australians.

**Canberra  
June 1999**