

# **Study Perth and the Governor's Establishment**

## **International Student Welcome**

### **Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC Governor of Western Australia**

**Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Wadjuk Noongar people – and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

These grounds, and the Swan River banks not far from where we stand now, have special significance to Aboriginal people. Among other uses, this was once used as a location for celebrations and gatherings.

Since first opening its doors in 1863, the House you see before you, has been the home of every Governor appointed to serve Western Australia. It brings me great pleasure to welcome you all to Western Australia, to Perth and to the beautiful, heritage-listed grounds of Government House which my wife Susie and I are fortunate to call our backyard.

I wish to extend an especially warm welcome to our international students who, together with their families, are embracing the opportunity to learn within one of our universities; the University of Western Australia, Murdoch University, Curtin University, Edith Cowan University and the University of Notre Dame.

Congratulations on choosing a university pathway. Each of our five universities are committed to providing you with not only a world-class education but a supportive, engaging and exciting university experience.

Each of you are part of a larger group that choose to explore and expand their career opportunities by living and undertaking study here in Western Australia.

I can say with some certainty that Government House, the Western Australian Government, Study Perth and each of our five universities, are as excited to welcome you to Perth as you may be to begin this adventure.

During your time here, please take advantage of the information and services on offer to you through StudyPerth and your university.

As international students, you contribute a lot to our city's social, economic and cultural vibrancy. As an outward facing, forward looking State, the links and relationships formed between Western Australia and countries across the Indo-Pacific region and the world, are central to our State's prosperity.

International students are critical to our State's diplomacy. The connections you form play a key role in aiding our State to build, enhance and maintain links with countries throughout the globe. You also help to enrich our cultural perspectives.

In coming to Western Australia, you will live and study in one of the most welcoming, supportive and safe cities. The Housing Industry Association has named Perth the most affordable capital city in Australia for housing. There are also an abundance of student discounts offered on public transport and in various stores, cinemas and restaurants.

You have also come to a State which celebrates our cultural diversity. 32.2% of Western Australians are born overseas with well over half of all Western Australians having one or both of their parents born overseas.

We are fortunate here in Western Australia to share a time zone with approximately 60 percent of the world. This may reassure you as it will allow most of you to remain in close, regular contact with your friends and family back home.

Perth is the sunniest capital in Australia, enjoying an annual average of 8.8 hours of sunshine a day. The differences in seasons are reflected not only in the climate but through the ever changing scenery. I recommend viewing Kings Park which is one of the biggest city parks in the world, larger than Central Park in New York and Hyde Park in London.

Also waiting for you to explore is our spectacular network of beaches and marine and national parks. Our parks are home to the largest collection of wildflowers in the world, with more than 12,000 species; over 60% of which are found nowhere else on earth.

Whilst your studies and education will rightly be the primary focus of your time here, I encourage you to take the time to get to know both Perth and Western Australia more broadly. Our State is rich in the history of the world's oldest continuous culture. The Pilbara and Kimberley regions of Western Australia contain some of the world's largest and oldest rock art in the world.

Western Australia is home to three world heritage areas; the Ningaloo Reef, Purnululu National Park and Shark Bay. Shark Bay is home to living fossils known as stromatolites, which are seen as the first record of life on Earth, approximately 3.5 billion years ago. There are also many other areas worth visiting, equally rich in history, cultural significance and natural beauty.

In choosing to reside and study here, you are joining an educational environment which has produced Nobel Prize winners Professor Barry Marshall AC and Emeritus Professor Robin Warren AC, world renowned actors such as Hugh Jackman, diplomats like Singapore's High Commissioner to Australia, Mr Kwok Kook Seng, award winners authors like Tim Winton and a long list of Olympians alongside many other noteworthy individuals.

Our universities have a large international presence with several international campuses and joint research initiatives with members of industry, other universities and research institutions in and outside of Western Australia. These include initiatives in medical technology, space, agriculture, energy and engineering, among others.

In 2018 the WA Government introduced the WA State Nominated Migration Program Graduate Stream and the Graduate occupation list which provides the opportunity for eligible, high performing graduates who have received a higher education qualification within Western Australia and studied within one of our five universities, to apply to live here in Western Australia.

This will allow you to further your experience here, should you grow to love Western Australia as much as I do.

Through undertaking studies here in Western Australia, you are not only benefiting from a world class education, you are also increasing your chances of attaining employment after graduating.

Perth is also home to the headquarters of 652 companies listed on the Australian Stock Exchange. ASX-listed Perth based companies are reported to have 195 overseas branch offices in 58 countries.

As the southern gateway to the Indo-Pacific region, Western Australia is also deeply connected to neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia and the broader Asian region providing an abundance of opportunity for individuals to further develop and launch global careers both here and abroad.

Perth businesses and industry bodies are closely linked with our universities. These links produce an abundance of opportunities for practical experience, work placement, skills development, and exposure to professional networks. Through embracing these opportunities, you are well positioned for future employment opportunities.

Our educational institutions and work places also benefit from your involvement. The connections you make alongside the knowledge and skills you share with one another may one day lead to ground-breaking research such as a medical discovery which revolutionises cancer treatment or an innovative technology which increases food production in arid climates or the development of future renewable energy platforms.

Through sharing your own knowledge, experience and stories during your time here, you help to further enrich our State and enhance the vibrancy of our classrooms and communities and we say thank you for that. Similarly, I hope that your experience here brings you memorable stories and discoveries you can share with your family and communities back home.

I hope that you have enjoyed the barbeque and the beauty of the grounds here at Government House and will continue to enjoy the evening. Should you wish to visit our gardens again, you will be pleased to know that you can do so anytime from 12.00pm until 2.00pm every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

I hope that this experience brings you all both personal and professional development, new friendships, memorable moments and lasting connections and is the beginning of a life-long relationship with Perth.