

Australian Tapestry Workshop 40th Birthday

Thursday 9 February 2017

If anyone had said to me 42 years ago that I would be here tonight after recently celebrating the 41st anniversary of my 50th birthday speaking at the Tapestry Workshop as its patron I would have said take a Bex and have a lie down. I would have just come from Government House where I was lucky to be one of a number at a meeting with Lady Delacombe, the wife of the then Governor proposed that Victoria should have Tapestry Workshop. When it came to my turn to speak I said there were at least 5 reasons why a Tapestry Workshop in Melbourne could not possibly succeed. She had agreed with all the reasons, but quietly said in her charming English manner "You are absolutely right Bails, but we are going to go ahead". How right she was, and how wrong I was. I have made many mistakes in my long life but that was a beauty!

Like John I marvel at what you / we have achieved over the 40 years. To have made over 500 tapestries that are placed in public buildings in so many countries, New Zealand, Singapore, USA, the UK, Washington, Italy, France, Japan, Ireland, India, China, UAE, Switzerland and no doubt are in other countries purchased by unknown collectors.

Our success only occurred because we had outstanding leadership through our Chairman, our Boards and our management, because we had

outstanding weavers working with great artists and because we had loyal supporters and friends.

Over the years the Workshop has been given some \$15million from Governments and sponsors and spent it wisely. We have been supported by the Tapestry Foundation with over \$5million; we have employed some 84 weavers and I have taught some of them here tonight personally all I know about weaving – it didn't take me long as I know nothing. We have employed some 40 administrative staff and 10 dye staff over the years. It is an outstanding record of which we all should be proud. We should talk about it, sing it from the rooftops, spread the word. If you don't blow your own trumpet no one else will blow it for you. Looking forward to the next 40 years, every one of us here tonight should pledge to do all we can to promote and support the Workshop.

It is my honour tonight to launch the annual Give An Inch campaign. Last year the campaign at \$20 an inch raised \$81,635, this year our target is \$150,000. The late King George was said to be every inch a King and every foot a Ruler. Sarah is very much the Ruler in our house and she and I are pleased to be among the first to kick off the campaign by donating 10 rulers (120 inches). We both wish the campaign every success.

Thank you.