

4:00 pm Wednesday 19 April 2006

Australia, my part in its making: Maiden speeches and crisis moments in Australia's federal parliament

David Lowe

Australian politicians entering parliament have been expected to embrace the formal ritual of delivering a maiden speech. While the degree of formality and convention surrounding maiden speeches has been adjusted over time, the expectation that a set-piece will be delivered has remained constant, and the delivering of a maiden speech retains high visibility today. In this presentation I explore the connections between maiden speeches and the telling of life stories. New parliamentarians are expected to tell something of their life stories, and also something of the story of their electorates, or even the nation. I am especially interested in how this meeting of national/local and life stories played out at moments of great change or crisis in Australia's political history since the Second World War.

David Lowe is Head of the School of History, Heritage and Society. David has published on Australia's involvement in wars, including the Cold War, and on aspects of Australia's overseas policies in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1999 he published the book, *Menzies and the 'Great World Struggle: Australia's Cold war 1948-1954* (UNSW Press); and in 2003 he published, with Joan Beaumont, Chris Waters and Garry Woodard, *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making 1941-1969* (MUP). He is currently researching and writing on several themes: parliamentary debates and Australian foreign policy; national service in the 1950s; the history of Australian involvement in the Colombo Plan; and the life of the late Sir Percy Spender, Australian Minister for External Affairs. David has spent several years of his education and subsequent academic career in England. He joined Deakin University from Cambridge in 1991, and from 1993 to 1995 was Monash Lecturer in Australian Politics at the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, University of London. He speaks, however, with no traces of an English accent.

**There is no entry charge and everyone is welcome.
Drinks and nibbles will be provided.**

The Blue Room , Building B, Room 2.. 20, Burwood Campus