

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY, SYDNEY AUSTRALIA

16 NOVEMBER 1989

EVENING OF MACEDONIAN POETRY READING IN THE PRESENCE OF

THE PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

MR BOGDONSKI

MACEDONIA AND AUSTRALIA - THE TIES THAT BIND

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The Hon Justice Michael Kirby CMG
Chancellor of Macquarie University

Mr President, Minister, Ladies & Gentlemen, my
colleagues of the University.

We must put the events of tonight in a wider context.
In our busy lives we tend to concentrate on the immediate and
not to see what we do in a proper historical setting. We
should try to do so tonight.

There are three things which are relevant and which
should be said. The first is that remarkable developments
are happening in the world and in Europe. Yesterday
Mr Lech Walesa of Poland was only the second private citizen
since Lafayette to address a joint sitting of the Congress of
the United States. Developments have occurred in Europe in
recent weeks which have caught the imagination of mankind.
More, I suspect, are in store. They have relevance to

Australia and to Macedonia and Yugoslavia.

The second thing to be said was that Australia was one of the countries in the forefront of developments which earlier led in the same direction. Under governments of different political persuasion, we adopted a national policy of multiculturalism. At the essence of this idea is the notion of tolerance and of diversity. We no longer insist that everyone in our country should be the same. Far from trying to stamp out the interesting and marvellous diversity that comes with people of different lands, including the great Republic of Macedonia, we seek to preserve and nourish these differences and to keep historic links and the cultures of our diverse people alive. That is no threat to Australia or its culture. It is an enhancement of it. Macquarie University plays its part by the provision of studies in languages and cultures which are ancient and which are now part of our Australian culture.

The third thing that links us tonight is a mystery. It is the mystery of poetry and words. Like music, why poetry's force fires our imagination is something that we cannot define logically. Why do combinations of the notes move us very deeply? We do not know. Why do combinations of words have such a powerful effect on us? We are not quite sure. But that they do have this impact and that they have an impact in all parts of the world is part of the link of humanity. So that at a moment of tremendous historical change and development, multiculturalism which I hope will

survive and flourish in our country and with the fundamental unity of humanity in our blue planet, we should see the contribution of the Macedonian Foundation of Macedonian Studies at this University as a practical step in the direction in which the world appears happily to be moving.

Mr President, I am a judge. The usual thing I hand out is a sentence, often of imprisonment. But the gifts that I give you are gifts of greeting and of welcome. These are small gifts as tokens of your visit here. I offer them to you and to the Minister in friendship and in the hope that you will take back to your country stories of Australia and of these real, abiding and growing links between our country and your country, between this University and Universities in Yugoslavia and Macedonia.