

Inaugural Address by MW Bro. A.L. Pearson
Grand Master of Mark Master Masons, South Australia and Northern Territory
7 June 2008

Ladies, Gentlemen and Brethren,

My first duty is to reaffirm the loyalty of this Grand Lodge to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and to the Commonwealth of Australia.

As a Freemason I take this opportunity to express my continuing loyalty to the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of South Australia and Northern Territory, MW Bro Graham Bollenhagen, and I look forward to working with you and Most Excellent Companion John Carter to further strengthen the relationship between us.

I thank the Brethren for their confidence in electing me and I repeat my promise to serve you to the best of my ability.

Our organisation is not alone in suffering a declining membership and therefore membership issues must continue to be addressed. I have said on previous occasions that the best advertisement for Mark Masonry is an active and involved Craft Mason who wears a Mark pocket jewel.

But we should not focus on membership issues to the exclusion of enjoying our Mark Masonry. History tells us that we must continue doing and teaching what we believe in, and celebrate its difference from other organisations. But whilst celebrating that difference we must maintain our relationship with society.

It would be easy for Freemasonry generally to become insular and inward looking but the Masonic Homes Project and the comparatively recent Men's Health Programme are positive statements about our place in and relationship with the wider community. I urge you all to promote the Men's Health seminars later this year amongst your family, friends and neighbours. This is an initiative for the benefit of everyone.

I am continually inspired and encouraged by the confidence of the brethren who so long ago built the Lodge rooms in towns such as Moonta, Naracoorte and Kapunda. They built for their time but with an expectation for the future, and we must do the same.

As each one of us continues his Masonic journey, we should remember that Grand Mark Lodge itself is on a similar journey and must learn to adapt. The Grand Lodge of 2008 is not the same as it was 102 years ago when it was founded, or even twenty five or five years ago and while we cling firmly to the same principles, our structure must continually evolve in pace with internal and external conditions. Let me give you one example. Not that many years ago there was competition for office in Grand Mark Lodge. I foresee the time when brethren may be asked to serve for more than one term in an office.

Within the organisation of Grand Lodge I would like to see an expanded role for the Grand Master's Advisory Council beyond officer selection, to include the preparation of discussion papers when required and bringing together the Grand Committee and the Royal Ark Council when there are matters of mutual interest.

We have moved well into the second century of Grand Mark Lodge and we will soon be involved in the sesquicentenary of Adelaide Mark Lodge No 1. I urge you to be part of the celebrations next January. Planning has already commenced. Later next year in October we will also celebrate the Centenary of Clare Mark Lodge.

Freemasonry is a very human endeavour and during my term I hope to renew friendships all over South Australia and the Northern Territory and to involve as many as possible in Grand Mark Lodge. I also intend to meet country brethren unable to travel to Adelaide to listen, and discuss any item of interest in relation to the Mark and Mariner Degrees. In 2009 I plan to visit the Lodges in the Northern Territory and I hope some of you will be able to accompany me in support of the Grand Master's representatives who do such an outstanding job. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible on these occasions.

The standards taught by Mark Masonry must be maintained. In these days where freedom is being confused with licence and the English language is losing elegance for functionality, Freemasonry is standing firm. The ritual that continues to serve us so well WILL be maintained.

Masonic ritual is about communication of ideas. An essential component of this is a sound knowledge of the background and history of those ideas. I encourage all members of the Mark who have not done so, to enrol in the Mark Education Course run by RW Bro. Fred Martin. I am delighted to add my congratulations to Bro Rajesh Mehra and VW Bro Krishna Kumar Gautam who have travelled from India to receive their certificates. We all hope you enjoy your stay in South Australia. In addition to the Education Course there is a wealth of interesting material on Mark and Mariner Masonry and your Grand Lecturers will be keen to share it with you. You have only to ask.

In the months leading up to this Grand Installation many, many people have contributed to its organisation. The committee led by RW Bro Colin Preece has laid down the foundation for this weekend and the Grand Secretary and his team of office staff have worked tirelessly to ensure its success. Brother Grand Secretary, I would ask you to record my thanks in your minutes of this Communication.

Ladies, gentlemen and brethren I thank you for your presence here today in support of this Grand Lodge.