



Presentation of the 2010 Barry Inglis Medal

**Hon Richard Marles MP
Parliamentary Secretary for Innovation and Industry**

11.00 am, 21 July 2010
NMI Head Office
Bradfield Road
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NSW

[check against delivery]

Each year on the 20th of May, those of us with a passion for science and measurement mark the 1875 signing of the Metre Treaty.

This day has become known as World Metrology Day and is an ideal occasion to recognise people who truly measure up.

Each year the National Measurement Institute (NMI) awards the Barry Inglis Medal.

The Barry Inglis Medal was established to mark the service of Dr Barry Inglis PSM, a metrologist of international eminence and also the first Chief Executive of NMI.

Barry was awarded the Public Service Medal in the 2007 Australia Day Honours for his service in leading the NMI through its first few years as a new public institution.

He retired from his post with NMI in late 2007 but of course, like many good scientists, 'retirement' is probably not an accurate description of the real situation.

Recently, Dr Inglis was elected to be the next President of the International Committee for Weights and Measures.

This is a highly prestigious scientific appointment which, since 1875, has only once before been held by a person from outside Europe.

I am delighted that Dr Inglis is able to be with us today.

It is clear that the science of measurement has a key national role.

Measurement underpins trade, industry, technology, and scientific research and development, in fact, most modern conveniences in our daily lives.

The Australian Government acknowledges this important role and provides direct support for measurement science through the National Measurement Institute, and through projects funded by the Australian Research Council.

At its most prosaic level, the majority of our activities involve measurement, whether they're things we make, something we buy, or something we sell.

While for many, near enough may be good enough, the science of measurement assists us all by establishing accurate legal and technical standards.

Measurement also contributes to fundamental science.

Our understanding of the universe, from the vastness of the cosmos down to the level of atoms, is based in large part in our ability to measure and compare our observations with theoretical predictions.

The Barry Inglis Medal acknowledges outstanding achievement in measurement research and/or excellence in practical measurements by an individual (or group) in the fields of academia, research or industry in Australia.

The medal may be awarded for a single major contribution or a body of work developed throughout a career.

This year the Barry Inglis Medal is awarded to Professor Ken Baldwin for exceptional achievement in measurements made in the pursuit of fundamental scientific knowledge.

In reading Ken's resume it's hard not to feel a bit inadequate by comparison. His achievements are simply amazing.

Ken Baldwin is a professor of physics at one of the nation's premier research establishments, the

Australian National University, in its Research School of Physics and Engineering.

His academic resume is highly distinguished, both in technical achievement and scientific leadership roles.

He is the Deputy Director of the Australian Research Council-funded Centre of Excellence for Quantum-Atom Optics.

He is a Fellow of the Australian and UK Institutes of Physics and the Optical Society of America.

He's also been invited to be a candidate for the institute's President – if he's elected he will be only the second non-American to serve in that role.

He has more than 80 refereed publications.

In 2004 he was the winner of the Australian Government's Eureka Prize for Promoting Understanding of Science.

In 2007 the Australian Optical Society awarded him the W. H. Steel Medal – its highest award.

Ken was the President of the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS) in 2008-09.

Ken has also played a leading role in developing a proposal in precision measurement that could enhance the Australia-New Zealand bid for the \$2.5 billion international Square Kilometre Array radio telescope.

Outside what is so obviously a distinguished academic career, Ken is also an accomplished Himalayan mountaineer.

He's taken part in two Himalayan expeditions.

I understand he'll be embarking on a third later this year.

Today Ken adds the Barry Inglis Medal to his list of honours for his work in:

- developing new laser-based techniques for high resolution ultraviolet optical measurements; and
- manipulating atoms using lasers to measure atomic parameters with unprecedented accuracy.

This work has contributed both to the science of measurement, and to fundamental knowledge in physics.

I take great pleasure in inviting Dr Inglis to present the 2010 Barry Inglis Medal for outstanding achievement in measurement research.