It is a great honour and privilege and pleasure to be here this afternoon, and it is no mere conventional expression of politeness when I say that I am delighted to have this opportunity to applaud and acclaim the work that CHASS is doing, and to express my wholehearted support for its purposes, aims and objectives. To some of their more parochially inclined practitioners, the arts, humanities and social sciences are separate disciplines and segregated worlds: yet most of us would surely agree that they gain much from interacting with each other, and it is wholly right that this organisation has come into being so as to represent and sustain them all. There are also some who believe that research, education and creative practice should be kept in distinct compartments: but (again) most of us would want to insist that these three activities are, and always should be, vitally linked together to their mutual benefit and enrichment.

Accordingly, I should like to begin by quoting some words which came towards the end of the brilliant lecture which Iain McCalman delivered last year, to mark the birth of CHASS, when he spoke of 'something we all know, but are inclined to take for granted: namely that the humanities, arts and social sciences are central to any civilised and decent society.' So, indeed, they are. Amen to that. But then: since most of us are practitioners in those areas of human knowledge and creative endeavour, we would say that, wouldn't we. What I should like to do this afternoon, having paid my heartfelt homage to that wonderful inaugurating lecture, is to take it in the spirit it was delivered, as a starting point rather than as a summation, and to offer some thoughts and suggestions of my own concerning the challenges we face, and the opportunities we have, in cherishing and fostering the arts, humanities and social sciences in the world we find ourselves in today -- a world which is, by turns vexed and bewildering, yet also hopeful and tractable -- as I suppose it has always been

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One of the most encouraging developments in recent years – and I am speaking here of the United States and the United Kingdom as well as of Australia – has been the growing realisation on the part of government that as our economies become ever more knowledge based, and as human capital replaces industrial capital as the most significant mode of production, we need to give much more thought to the essential inter-connectedness of the arts, the humanities and the social sciences on the one hand, and of science and technology on the other, in the essential processes of creativity and innovation. I know

that Malcolm Gillies will be speaking about this tomorrow afternoon, and I don't want to pre-empt what he is going to say then. But I would want to insist that if that is indeed the case, then we are going to have to undertake a great deal of major re-thinking, at all educational levels from elementary school to university, as to how we teach and train the next generation of innovators and leaders in the broad range of disciplines they are going to need to know about and command. And it will not only be necessary to undertake a great deal of re-thinking: it will also be necessary, in the light of that, to undertake a great deal of additional expenditure as well.

Because western governments seem increasingly aware of the relevance of the arts, humanities and social sciences to the knowledge-based economy, this is giving us new arguments with which to approach our paymasters in power, and we should mobilize and deploy them as vigorously and as persuasively as we can. But while that is a development which we should all both applaud and encourage, let me devote this lecture to offering two observations which are well meant, cautionary and also exhortatory. The first is that, however successfully these arguments are made, and however much this leads to increased resources becoming available, the fact remains that no government will ever give the arts, the humanities and the social sciences as much funding as they deserve or as they demand. Like most economic activity, the giving out of government money is to do with the allocation of scarce resources. There is not now, and there will never be, enough federal funding to go around, and however successful CHASS becomes at getting a bigger slice of the Canberra cake, it will, in the nature of things, never be big enough.

This is something that the creative arts sector understands very well, here in Australia as elsewhere. But it is something that the humanities and the social sciences are much less ready to recognize. In my experience, and I do not think I am atypical here, academics love to complain, and the one thing they love to complain about more than any other is that government funding is insufficient: for their salaries, for their research projects, for their graduate students, for their buildings, and so on. Indeed, for some academics, complaining about this is not merely a means of expressing justifiable annoyance, regret or disappointment when things go wrong or don't happen: it becomes a way of life, a culture of introverted yet also collective resentment, which elevates alienation above activity, equates moral superiority with impotent outrage, and prefers armchair criticism to engaged creativity. From this perspective, the cultural whinge is far more

deadly and debilitating than the cultural cringe. For it cuts off, and renders literally unthinkable for many university-based practitioners in the humanities and the social sciences what is in fact a vital potential source of alternative and additional funding – and that is, of course, the money that is available from private and philanthropic sources.

In putting forward this view, I realise that I am setting myself against what might be called the conventional wisdom of many professional academics and public sector employees, who dislike business people and distrust the private sector on principle, who have no wish to sully their much-vaunted moral purity by becoming (as they would see it) complicit in the capitalist project, who are convinced that all potential benefactors are manipulative monsters whose only concern is to drive forward their own reactionary political and cultural agenda, and who regard fund raising as something which is simultaneously too vulgar to contemplate, and too difficult and too demanding to undertake. These attitudes have got to change, these attitudes can be changed, and these attitudes are changing: and in support of that proposition, I hope you will forgive me for rising to the supreme conceit of citing an example from my own experience.

In 1998, I left Columbia University in New York, where I had taught for ten years, and I returned to Britain as Director of the Institute of Historical Research in the University of London. It was both a venerable and a valued organisation, with a devoted staff and a world wide membership. But the government funding was inadequate, it was failing to keep pace with the intellectual and technological developments of the late twentieth century, and the mindset of the staff was precisely that morbid and negative culture of resentment and complaint that I have just described. In the period when I was Director, that all changed; and it changed because we succeeded in raising more than ten million pounds, with the result that we are now in the position that more than half our annual income is generated in this way. The bad news is that we have to keep on doing it; the good news is that we want to keep on doing it, because this additional funding has transformed the place, by enabling us to undertake so many more vital, exciting and engaging activities than would otherwise ever have been possible.

In the light of my own experience, I would insist that successful fund raising from private, non-government sources creates opportunities and makes possible choices which otherwise just do not exist. And it also has a rejuvenating effect on staff morale: instead of

complaining about things they can't do, they now make the effort to raise the money so as to ensure that they can do what they want to do. Of course, they don't always succeed: but they do believe in what they're doing, and the ratio of success to failure is sufficient to sustain that belief. And I should add that in all my dealings with potential donors, be they individuals or foundations, I have never once found them devious or manipulative: on the contrary, most of them are people with a lifetime's experience of giving money away, they can recognise a good or a bad proposal when they see it, or a promising idea that needs improving and refining, and in virtually every case where I have put forward an application, it has been immeasurably improved in subsequent discussion thanks to their wise and helpful and experienced input.

But, you may object, while this sort of thing can sometimes be accomplished in the United Kingdom, and is a way of life for universities in the United States, there is little prospect of it ever happening here in Australia because the philanthropic foundations and private benefactors just don't exist in the same way or on the same scale, or because, if they do, the creative arts have already got there first. But perhaps it would be more helpful to reformulate that proposition by saying that here in Australia the philanthropic foundations and private benefactors don't yet exist in the same way or on the same scale. But that doesn't mean that they will never exist. After all, such bodies and such people didn't exist in the United States before the early decades of the twentieth century, and in the United Kingdom they are of even more recent origin. There was nothing pre-destined or pre-ordained about their coming into being. But they did happen there and, since Australia is also a rich country, with many rich citizens, there is no reason why, given time and effort, they should not happen here.

One task, then, to which CHASS should sooner or later turn its attention is to work for closer contact between universities, the private sector, and potential individual donors. For just as academics in the humanities and the social sciences need to be encouraged and persuaded to think outside the box of government funding, so rich companies and rich individuals need to be persuaded that responsible, creative, engaged philanthropy is an essential element in what they do, and also, perhaps, an essential justification of what else they do. One rich American, of a very distinguished philanthropic dynasty, once told me that in his family, everyone divided their life into three equal phases: they learned, they earned, and then they returned, by which he

meant they each devoted the last phase of their lives to giving something back. Families such as the Mellons and the Rockefellers have not only set up major foundations: they have also, across the generations, given a great deal of money personally as well. How much longer does Australia have to wait before (to cite the obvious example) the Murdoch family are educated into taking a similar view of their wealth and their responsibilities? And what plans should CHASS be formulating to help bring that about?

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Of course, it may be objected that CHASS has already got more than enough to be doing: representing the interests of the arts, the humanities and the social sciences to government is, in all conscience, already a big, important and time consuming job. So, indeed, it is; and so it will ever remain. But even now, it is not the only source of funding: and at the very least, CHASS should give serious consideration to asking how, across the whole sector, it can help encourage here in Australia a serious culture of fund-raising on the one side, and of engaged philanthropy on the other. We should not regard the government as the only potential funding body for the arts, the humanities and the social sciences. Nor should we regard the performance indicators set by government as being the only means by which the arts, the humanities and the social sciences should be justified and assessed. For while we should constantly stress, in our conversations with government, their major utilitarian contribution to the evolving knowledge economy, we should not sell them short by seeming to imply that this is the only, or even the primary, reason why they should be fostered and cherished.

This is, indeed, my second well-meant, cautionary and exhortatory observation, and here I return to Iain McCalman's remarks that the arts, the humanities and the social sciences are central to any decent and civilised society. Indeed they are; but we have to recognise that much of that centrality, and therefore much of their significance, cannot be evaluated in the sort of ways on which government now insists with regard to almost every form of activity that it deems worthy of funding. We cannot quantify happiness. We cannot quantify tolerance. We cannot measure understanding. We cannot measure imagination. Yet we should be neither defensive nor apologetic about the fact that we cannot do this. On the contrary, we should celebrate and proclaim it, for herein lies much of the very point and purpose of the arts, the humanities and the social sciences. Of course, education,

like life, is in part about training and about skills, and to that extent it is, indeed, a utilitarian enterprise. But education, like life, should also be non-utilitarian: and as such, it should be about happiness, tolerance, understanding and imagination. And it is those qualities, those attributes, those casts of mind, those ways of seeing both ourselves and our world, which the arts, the humanities and the social sciences are uniquely well equipped to provide.

How do they do so? One way, and this can be as true of a painting, a drama, a symphony, a great work of history, a profound piece of philosophy, a judicial verdict, a sociological treatise, or an ancient or modern language, is that they enrich and enhance our lives as individuals as we make our one-time earthly journey, by challenging our intellects, by intensifying our emotions, by stimulating our imaginations, and thus by broadening our experiences and deepening our sensibilities. In an earlier era, that was the justification advanced for providing what used to be called a liberal education; and while that phrase is no longer used, the justification remains as valid. Let me give a personal example. In 1969, in what would now be called my gap year between school and university, I had the good fortune to watch Kenneth Clark's Civilisation. Today, I suspect, it would be dismissed as being too male-dominated and too Eurocentric; but I have never forgotten the impact it made, nor failed to be grateful to it: for opening up a whole world of art and thought and feeling which I might never otherwise have encountered. And what was true for me was, I suspect, true for hundreds of thousands of other people across and around the world, whose lives have been similarly and immeasurably enriched as a result.

But it is not just that the arts, the humanities and the social sciences provide unprecedented opportunities for individual cultural enrichment and personal self fulfilment. It is also that they simultaneously take us outside ourselves, by bringing us into contact with other centuries, other continents, other cultures, other civilisations. And by so doing, they provide the most compelling riposte to two of the most besetting limitations of our contemporary society: the temporal parochialism which presumes that the only time is now, and to the geographical parochialism which presupposes that the only place is here. We cannot remind ourselves too often that humanity has been around for a long time, and that it has inhabited, and still inhabits, in many parts of the globe other than here. It has struggled with problems at least as great as those which confront us, and people at least as decent as we have held views, sincerely,

honestly and sometimes painfully, which might seem to us abhorrent. From such awareness come tolerance, perspective, proportion, generosity of spirit: modes of being and doing and thinking and feeling and seeing which the arts, the humanities and the social sciences uniquely teach us, and which no society that purports to be civilised or decent can ever do without.

Let me give an example of what I mean. A few weeks ago, I happened to find myself at a reception in the National Portrait Gallery in London for the annual BP Portrait Award. The NPG depends on both government funding, and raising private money; it brings together portraiture and history in a particularly resonant mix; and it is one of the top visitor attractions in the country. For its part, BP is one of the most responsible and innovative of Britain's multi national companies, its CEO John Browne is the country's most esteemed business leader, and it takes its sponsorship obligations very seriously. There is much that I could say about the NPG and BP, but for now I want to observe that the high point of this particular occasion was the speech made by David Lammy, who had recently been appointed Arts Minister in the aftermath of the General Election. The purpose of art, he said in a brief but brilliant impromptu speech, was to enable us to stand back from the pressing imperatives of our everyday lives, and to help us to see ourselves in proportion and our world in perspective. That, he insisted, was why we needed the arts, and why they matter. Would that all government ministers possessed such a vividly – and humblingly -- realistic sense of the world and of their own place within it!

Such a justification of the arts, and also of the humanities and the social sciences, may not commend itself to those who hold the purse-strings of government funding. But we should be neither dismayed nor intimidated by that: in part because we know these things are good in themselves, and in part because they also have the potential to deliver far greater human gains than anything that can be measured by the pervasive and often oppressively pedantic audit culture. Today, and every day, we are constantly invited, by politicians and policy makers and pundits, to see the world in stark, adversarial, polarised terms: black versus while, men versus women, rich versus poor, Israelis versus Palestinians, Catholic versus Protestant, Christian versus Muslim. In the light of recent events, on this side of the world and on the other, it is hard to deny some validity to such a view. But we must never forget that many conversations are also being carried on across these supposedly impermeable boundaries of collective identity and

mutual hostility – conversations that are often motivated by those very attributes of tolerance, perspective, proportion and breadth of view which the arts, the humanities and the social sciences so insistently and importantly teach. Conceived in a utilitarian way, they may help bring prosperity; conceived in a non-utilitarian way, they are our best hope for peace. And there is no performance indicator that could possibly be more important or significant than that.

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I fear I have by now tried your patience long enough, and it is high time I brought these remarks of mine to a close, and let me, in so doing, tie up some loose ends that remain. May I begin by reiterating my admiration for all that CHASS is doing in making the case to government of the importance of the arts, the humanities and the social sciences, and of the responsibility that places on government to fund them generously and imaginatively. But may I also suggest that, while CHASS also presses, as I believe it should, the non-utilitarian agenda alongside its more utilitarian arguments, it should consider how to try to cultivate a larger private philanthropic sector, not least because such a sector might – just might -- to be more sympathetic to such arguments than government is ever likely to be. And, as well as preaching the virtues of perspective and proportion, I hope CHASS will apply them not only to the world outside, but also to itself, and take both a long and a broad view of its own remit and mission: broad in that it should not confine its efforts to government, important and essential though those undoubtedly are; and long in the sense that there is no quick fix for the arts, the humanities and the social sciences, which means this is only the beginning of an enterprise which is going to take, and also to need, a long time.

For let it be clear, there is a great deal at stake here – as, indeed, there has always been. Just over sixty years ago, Franklin Delano Roosevelt famously described and defined what he termed four basic freedoms: freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of worship and freedom of speech. As such, they were essentially negative freedoms, the removal of constraints – hunger, intimidation, intolerance and censorship – rather than positive freedoms, namely the provision of opportunities. But if we also think about freedom positively, as being concerned with making peoples' lives as rich, as varied, as fulfilling as they can possibly be, then the arts, the humanities and the social sciences are not an optional extra: they are an essential element in any civilised and decent society, and an

essential part of the make up of any civilised and decent person. Thus regarded, they are a vital element of freedom itself, and there is nothing, I repeat nothing, that is more important than that.