

Castan Centre for Human Rights Law



NEWSLETTER

Dalai Lama Inspires Packed House at Monash



His Holiness The Dalai Lama addresses the Castan Centre at Robert Blackwood Hall as his entourage and an expert panel look on.

By Marius Smith

The visit of the Dalai Lama to Monash University in June of this year was a marvellous event, witnessed by 1600 excited onlookers who had snapped up tickets in just over a day when they went on sale months earlier.

After six months of planning by the Castan Centre and its co-host, the Australia Tibet Council, it was a relief for all concerned that the day itself turned out to be such a wonderful event. His Holiness had chosen the Monash event to deviate from his usual themes of religious observance to instead talk about conflict resolution, most particularly with China.

His speech was a serious statement about his position on Tibet, an impassioned plea to give Tibet its autonomy within the Chinese nation.

After his speech, the event lightened up considerably as he joked onstage with his aides, and interacted with a panel of journalists and academics assembled to quiz him further on his relations with China and hopes for the future of Tibet.

His discussion roamed from his meetings with Mao Tse Tung, visits to Taiwan and his time in India as a refugee.

His Holiness was his usual quick-witted self and extraordinarily sprightly considering his advancing age and the gru-

elling nature of his schedule while in Australia. His motorcade arrived at Monash direct from an event for thousands of youth at the Rod Laver Arena, having previously addressed crowds in rural Victoria and around the nation.

After the event, as the audience slowly made its way out, His Holiness said his goodbyes backstage to a group that included Nellie Castan, wife of the late Ron Castan whom he had met many years earlier and came to know well.

The Castan Centre was delighted when His Holiness decided to visit Monash and the memories of the day will remain with all of us for years to come.