

The Governor of South Australia officially opens the PR Begg Museum in Adelaide, South Australia

A speech delivered by Her Excellency the Honorable Frances Adamson, AC at the official opening of the new PR Begg Museum —30 September 2022

(Aust Orthod J 2023; 39: 130 - 131. DOI: 10.2478/aoj-2023-0012)

“It is my great pleasure to join you to officially open the new P. R. Begg museum.

In doing so, we celebrate the outstanding work of Dr Percy Raymond Begg and acknowledge his world-renowned research and innovative clinical techniques.

I am also delighted to bring a Vice Regal connection to today’s ceremony.

At Government House I can look out over the front gardens and see Shell House where Dr Begg practiced.

As well, plaques of prominent South Australians line the North Terrace boulevard and Dr Begg’s plaque

is near the statue of former Governor Dame Roma Mitchell opposite Shell House.

I often walk past.

I need not mention to an audience such as this, that South Australia has a long tradition of medical firsts.

Indeed, Dr Begg himself set many firsts.

Dr Begg’s work revolutionized orthodontic treatment and earned him respect, gratitude and many awards over his 55-year career.

He opened the first orthodontic practice in Adelaide and joined the University of Adelaide as the first lecturer in orthodontics.

He was prodigious in his contributions.



Figure 1. Left to right: Emeritus Professor Wayne Sampson AM, Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson, AC (Governor of South Australia) alongside members of the Begg family.

Despite being the only orthodontist in Adelaide for nearly 30 years, he ran a very busy practice, taught orthodontics, conducted research for his Doctor of Dental Science degree and also progressively developed what came to be known as the light wire technique or Begg technique.

He was generous in sharing his knowledge. His research and clinical methods when published in the mid 1950s ensured that the world's focus in the field was on Dr Begg and Adelaide.

In changing the practice of orthodontics he was a catalyst for improvements that benefit the public today—not only through the role that orthodontics plays in keeping teeth and jaws healthy, but in the way it can boost self-esteem because of the value that society rightly or wrongly places on facial appearance.

This museum has been re-created and re-imagined from the earlier Begg museum which was established in 1986 as part of SA's sesqui-centenary celebrations.

The earlier museum was decommissioned when the Adelaide Dental Hospital was demolished as part of the Lot 14 development.

I am sure I speak for all when I congratulate the Australasian Begg Society of Orthodontists and the South Australian branch for deciding that his legacy was too precious to let it disappear.

I admire your tenacity in achieving your vision.

Today's museum is the result of many hours of painstaking voluntary work by many. Congratulations and thank you for your efforts and those who have financially supported the venture.

The result is a place where many dentists, orthodontists, dental students and members of the community can connect with one of our esteemed pioneers in the field.

I look forward to its further development both physically here and on the web.

It gives me great pleasure to declare the new P. R. Begg museum open" (Figure 1).

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest. Vice-Regal approval was sought and granted to publish this speech.