At the Sydney Opera House in 1998, the then President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, announced the campaign to establish a Chair in Irish Studies at UNSW. In 2010, Rónán McDonald was appointed as the inaugural Australian Ireland Fund Chair in Modern Irish Studies. This September, Professor McDonald will welcome Dr McAleese back to Sydney. We will hear Dr McAleese’s reflections on her distinguished career and her life since the presidency, and her thoughts about contemporary Irish society, the peace process and the Irish diaspora.

Date and time: 10 September 2014, 6.00pm
Venue: Leighton Hall, John Niland Scientia Building, UNSW Sydney
Register online: https://irish.arts.unsw.edu.au/
Contact: William Balfour
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Dr Mary McAleese was President of Ireland from 1997 to 2011. The first person from Northern Ireland to be elected Head of State of the Republic of Ireland, she was re-elected unopposed for a second term in 2004. She held this high office during a crucial period in recent Irish history, in the aftermath of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. She won acclaim and respect from all sections of Irish society, and is widely acknowledged to have used her office to advance the causes of peace and reconciliation in Ireland. Dr McAleese has a longstanding commitment to justice, equality, social inclusion, anti-sectarianism and reconciliation. A barrister and former Professor of Law at both Queen’s University Belfast and Trinity College Dublin, Dr McAleese has strong academic interests, and after her period of office pursued a doctorate in Canon Law at the Gregorian University in Rome. She has recently been a visiting scholar in Irish Studies at Boston College in the United States.