

NOTES FOR THE PRIME MINISTER,
FOR A CIVIC RECEPTION IN
FORBES, N.S.W. 17 MAY 1975

1. I AM DELIGHTED TO BE MAKING MY FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO FORBES. THIS CITY, BORN IN THE GOLDRUSH DAYS OF THE 1860'S, IS NOW THE CENTRE OF A THRIVING AGRICULTURAL AND PASTORAL INDUSTRY. LIKE SO MANY TOWNS OF THE PERIOD IT RETAINS MANY OF THE BUILDINGS AND MUCH OF THE CHARACTER OF ITS EARLY YEARS, TOGETHER WITH THE SIGNS OF MODERN COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.
2. FOR TOO LONG PEOPLE IN COUNTRY TOWNS HAVE BEEN PUTTING UP WITH SERVICES AND AMENITIES INFERIOR TO THOSE IN THE CAPITAL CITIES. THE LABOR GOVERNMENT IS DETERMINED THAT TOWNSPEOPLE IN THE COUNTRY WILL ENJOY A STANDARD OF LIVING EQUAL TO THE BEST IN AUSTRALIA.
3. OUR OPPONENTS SEEM TO THINK THAT A GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY IN COUNTRY AREAS ENDS WITH THE FARMER, THE MAN ON THE LAND. CERTAINLY WE RECOGNISE THAT PROSPERITY IN COUNTRY AREAS DEPENDS LARGELY ON A PROSPEROUS RURAL COMMUNITY. AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE NOT GOING TO NEGLECT THE MILLIONS OF AUSTRALIANS - EMPLOYEES AND FAMILIES - WHO LIVE IN TOWNS LIKE FORBES. THEY DESERVE THE SAME STANDARDS OF EDUCATION, THE SAME STANDARDS OF HOUSING, THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH AND RECREATION AS AUSTRALIANS IN THE MAJOR CITIES.

4. ONE OF THE FIRST ACTS OF THIS GOVERNMENT WAS TO EMPOWER THE GRANTS COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES. IN THIS WAY THE GRANTS COMMISSION WILL BE ABLE TO ALLEVIATE INEQUALITIES BETWEEN REGIONS, IN THE SAME WAY THAT IT HAS ACTED TO REMOVE INEQUALITIES BETWEEN THE STATES. IN ITS FIRST SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS, THE COMMISSION ALLOCATED MORE THAN \$21 MILLION FOR LOCAL COUNCILS IN NEW SOUTH WALES. FORBES MUNICIPAL COUNCIL RECEIVED \$90,000 FOR 1974-75.

5. UNDER THE REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT SCHEME, THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS APPROVED ASSISTANCE TO THE FORBES MUNICIPALITY AMOUNTING TO \$665,000 TO DATE. SHIRES WITHIN THE FORBES DISTRICT HAVE RECEIVED GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE UNDER REDS TOTALLING \$765,000.

6. NO GOVERNMENT HAS DONE MORE TO ALLEVIATE THE EFFECTS OF NATURAL DISASTERS. WE ESTABLISHED THE NATURAL DISASTERS RELIEF ORGANISATION, WHICH HAS ALREADY PROVED ITS VALUE BY ITS MAGNIFICENT WORK IN DARWIN AND DURING THE BUSHFIRES LAST SUMMER IN NEW SOUTH WALES. WE ARE ESTABLISHING THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INSURANCE CORPORATION TO PROVIDE INSURANCE COVER AGAINST NATURAL DISASTERS AT THE LOWEST POSSIBLE COST TO HOUSEHOLDERS. MAJOR FLOODING OCCURRED IN FORBES AND THE SURROUNDING AREA DURING AUGUST AND SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR. THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PROVIDED \$100,000 - ON A DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR BASIS WITH THE STATE - FOR RELIEF MEASURES AND WILL GIVE FURTHER FUNDS FOR RESTORATION.

7. RECURRENT GRANTS TOTALLING MORE THAN \$101,000 HAVE BEEN MADE SINCE JANUARY 1973 TO 6 NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS IN FORBES - MARIST BROTHERS' COLLEGE, OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE, SACRED HEART INFANTS SCHOOL, ST LAWRENCE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND LACH-HAVEN SPECIAL SCHOOL.

8. THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH HAS APPROVED A GRANT OF \$57,014 TO THE NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT TO CONSTRUCT AND EQUIP A SCHOOL DENTAL CLINIC AT FORBES. THIS IS PART OF A PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE IN NEW SOUTH WALES, FOR WHICH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY APPROVED MORE THAN \$5.5 MILLION.

9. GRANTS TO FORBES AND PARKES SINCE 1972 FOR AGED PERSONS HOMES AND HOSTELS TOTAL \$1,497,171.

10. AS PART OF ITS PROGRAM TO IMPROVE HEALTH CARE SERVICES THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA, THE GOVERNMENT IS ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY HEALTH RESOURCES CENTRE TO SERVE FORBES, PARKES, COWRA AND WEST WYALONG. THE CENTRE WILL RECRUIT AND MANAGE A TEAM OF NURSES AND OTHER HEALTH WORKERS TO CARE FOR PEOPLE AND STAFF EXISTING BABY HEALTH CENTRES. THE PROJECT HAS BEEN ALLOCATED \$89,690 THIS FINANCIAL YEAR.

11. SEVEN GRANTS TOTALLING MORE THAN \$4,700 HAVE BEEN MADE TO ARTS AND CRAFTS GROUPS IN THE FORBES AND PARKES DISTRICT,

 12. THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS MADE AVAILABLE \$53,000 IN GRANTS TO THE STATES FOR EXTENSIONS TO HOUSES ON THE NANIMA RESERVE, WHERE MOST ABORIGINALS IN THE DISTRICT LIVE.
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