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PRIME MINISTER

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LIBERAL PARTY ART EXHIBITION, SYDNEY

I would like to thank, because I have not been to many occasions in New South Wales since the last Federal Election, Bruce McDonald and the State President, and all of those who worked so hard during a somewhat difficult period; all those people who proved the polls wrong and led to a magnificent result in N.S.W. for the Federal Government. So, thank you all very much.

It is great to see Sir Kenneth Anderson, former Federal Minister for Health, because he has worked for the Liberal Party for so long and with such effect. Ken, good fortune to you and thank you for being here.

It is a little changed being here, from the company of the State Premiers I have been keeping during the course of the day. I owe them some thanks because at about 7 o'clock tonight I had to say to them, 'now, you know I have this commitment in Sydney which is about 6 months old, but if you want me to stay on for the Premiers' Conference, or for the Loan Council, I will. So if you want to go on working all night, I am prepared to, otherwise I will come back into the whole of Saturday and all of Sunday, and most of Monday'. Well, probably most of them felt that there had been enough work done during the course of the day. The Loan Council proceedings were over and finished. So they said, "you had better get on up to Sydney for the evening". I think probably a few of them had seen too much of me during the course of the day and were delighted to be rid of me. But anyway, it was a reasonably successful day in terms of the economy of this country. I cannot say anything more than that because we are back there tomorrow. Today's business is done, but there is more business tomorrow. So, I do not want to prejudice that.

I would like to thank all the artists who have their works hung around the walls today. I did not have a chance to have a look at all the paintings, but obviously there are some magnificent works of art and it is good to see. I saw one that I would have been sorely tempted to buy, and then I went forward and approached it and started to pull off the red sticker that was already there. I was told I was not allowed to do that.

One of the great things about the richness of life in Australia is our artists, our painters, our singers, musicians, the theatre, the ballet, the opera, and so it goes on. I suppose because of what we have argued we have had to do over the last five years, we are often regarded as just being economic managers with not much concern for anything else. But in fact, a large part of trying to run an economy well is so that people will have money to spend on paintings, so that people will be able to support the opera and the ballet and all of those things that make the richness of life in a country.

A large part of trying to run an economy well is so that not only people will have the resources they want for their own needs, but so that Governments will have the resources to do the things that Governments ought to support well. I was happy to be at a dinner and able to announce a week or so ago that we would be supporting a new home and a new headquarters for the National Institute of Dramatic Art, which produced magnificent actors and actresses over the years but in the most difficult conditions. That again, comes out of an economy that is better run because it gives us the resources to do it.

There is a resurgence in the Liberal Party of N.S.W. - and Bruce, I want to congratulate you on what you have already achieved, and I would like to congratulate you on the way you are challenging Mr. Wran and making him withdraw from the challenges. Hopefully there might be many occasions on which that can be done over the future days and weeks.

I do not under-estimate the task in front of Bruce. It is a massive one, because Mr. Wran has had much supporting him. He has had a honeymoon that has gone on over a long time.

There is a great task, and there is a new heart. I believe that if people can understand some of the things that Mr. Wran is doing that they are going to change their allegiances when the opportunities are offered. The corruption of the policies of public funding and the opportunities that opens for the most improper pressures upon people and individuals and companies, and the kind of priorities it exemplifies - it is more important to give money to the Labor Party than to a kindergarten or a child care centre or to some other proper purpose. But anyway, Bruce is in there fighting, on our behalf, for the Liberal Party in this State, and Bruce good fortune to you.