



**PRIME MINISTER**

FOR MEDIA

TUESDAY, 23 MARCH 1982

AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL TREE PLANTING

I'd like to congratulate you very much on having your second national conference in Canberra and I think the first seminar. From my information on the first occasion there wasn't a seminar of the kind that was organised yesterday. I understand that went well and was regarded as a great success. You can't really blame us if you haven't been recognised in some special and unique way, because if you have a National Conference in Canberra in 1951 then turn around and forget that this capital exists for 30 years. So now I'm very glad that that decision has been rectified and you have had a national conference here. I've also noted what you have said about the National Institute of Sport.

The Institute is expanding, it will be embracing additional sports, I'm not quite sure of the mechanisms that the Institute uses to choose which sport, but as sometimes a supporter of the Australian game, I only hope that you put up a very good case and one that is irresistible and can't be rejected. As a supporter of football if you don't put up a case that is as strong as that, and as good as that, I'll be writing to people who represent my interests in football to see why they didn't do a better job. I do hope that you do have success with that application.

You mentioned New Zealand, you know if the Australian game was stronger and overwhelming in New Zealand, some of the problems we have had and are likely to have, just wouldn't have been present. So there is a challenge in front of you to maybe replace rugby and become the number one game in New Zealand, because I've got no doubt that that would do a great deal for ties with New Zealand and Australia.

I would just like to wish all good fortune to all of you.

The administration of Australian football has really been undertaken on a high plane over recent years in a way that has advanced the game wherever it is played, and it is not just players who make the game, it is the administration, and you're here in that capacity. I believe you have every right to be proud in the way this game has been managed in recent times while its been in your collective charges. May Australian football go from strength to strength whether it is in Australia or elsewhere.