

S85/53



PRIME MINISTER

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

THE OPENING OF COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT CENTRE,
TOWNSVILLE, 24 SEPTEMBER 1985

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

IT IS A GREAT PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU TODAY.

I HAVE ALWAYS ENJOYED COMING TO QUEENSLAND, AND PARTICULARLY TO TOWNSVILLE.

IT WAS NEARLY TWO YEARS AGO THAT I TURNED THE FIRST SOD OF THIS NEW BUILDING - A PHYSICAL TESTAMENT TO THE COMMONWEALTH'S INTEREST IN AND INVOLVEMENT WITH THIS REGION.

THIS NEW CENTRE WILL MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO PEOPLE LIVING IN THE TOWNSVILLE AREA. PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY IT WILL IMPROVE THE CONVENIENCE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE 18 COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENTS PREVIOUSLY SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE TOWNSVILLE AREA BY PROVIDING A SINGLE CONTACT POINT.

OF PARTICULAR CONVENIENCE ARE THE SHOPFRONT FACILITIES LOCATED AT STREET AREA LEVEL WHERE THEY WOULD BE EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC PARTICULARLY THE AGED AND HANDICAPPED.

BEYOND THAT, THE \$11 MILLION SPENT ON BUILDING AND FURBISHING THIS CENTRE HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MANY PERSONS IN TOWNSVILLE.

NOW COMPLETED, THIS CENTRE WILL PROVIDE A MODERN AND WELL-DESIGNED WORKING ENVIRONMENT. I NOTE THAT THE NEW CENTRE FEATURES SEVERAL ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES INCLUDING THE USE OF TINTED GLASS AND SUNSCREENS ON ALL WINDOWS, ROOF INSULATION, SOLAR HOT WATER SYSTEMS WITH ELECTRIC BOOSTERS AND THE AUTOMATIC REDUCTION OF ARTIFICIAL LIGHTING LEVELS IN OFFICES AFTER HOURS OR WHEN NATURAL LIGHTING LEVELS ARE ADEQUATE.

MY GOVERNMENT IS PROUD TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THIS CENTRE AND PROUD OF THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTION THAT OUR PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM MAKES TO THE QUEENSLAND ECONOMY. WE WILL

BE SPENDING AN ESTIMATED \$133 MILLION ON OUR PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM IN QUEENSLAND IN THIS YEAR.

THAT PROGRAM WILL, OF COURSE, INCLUDE WORK ON THE TOWNSVILLE AIRPORT WHICH IS ESTIMATED TO COST IN EXCESS OF \$15 MILLION WHEN COMPLETED. I EXPECT THAT THE BENEFITS TO THE PEOPLE OF TOWNSVILLE OF THAT PROJECT WILL BE SUBSTANTIAL, PROVIDING IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS AND ACCESS TO AND FROM THE REST OF AUSTRALIA.

OUR PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM IS MERELY ONE SMALL PART OF MY GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL ECONOMIC STRATEGY BASED ON THE PRICES AND INCOMES ACCORD. WE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED TO RESTORE PROSPERITY TO THE ECONOMY THROUGH SUSTAINED NON-INFLATIONARY GROWTH AT RATES NECESSARY TO REDUCE THE UNACCEPTABLY HIGH LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

MY GOVERNMENT'S CREDENTIALS AS EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC MANAGERS HAVE BEEN CLEARLY ESTABLISHED. DURING OUR PERIOD IN OFFICE, THERE HAVE BEEN 430,700 NEW JOBS CREATED, AND UNEMPLOYMENT HAS FALLEN TO 8.3 PER CENT AUSTRALIA-WIDE.

I AM PLEASED THAT TOWNSVILLE HAS PARTICIPATED IN THIS RECOVERY AND HAS IN FACT FARED SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER THAN QUEENSLAND AS A WHOLE DURING THE RECOVERY. THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN TOWNSVILLE IN DECEMBER 1984 WAS 9.2 PER CENT. WHILE STILL UNACCEPTABLY HIGH, THAT FIGURE COMPARES FAVOURABLY WITH A RATE OF 10.9 PER CENT IN DECEMBER 1984 FOR THE NORTH AND FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND AREA AS A WHOLE AND A RATE OF 10 PER CENT FOR QUEENSLAND.

I NOTE THAT THE GROWTH IN EMPLOYMENT GENERATED BY THE EXPANDING TOURIST INDUSTRY IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE AND THAT THE OPENING OF THE BREAKWATER ISLAND CASINO IN 1986 IS FORECAST TO EMPLOY OVER 400 PEOPLE.

WITH ITS DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY, YOUR CITY IS WELL PLACED TO SHARE IN THE ECONOMIC GROWTH THAT MY GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES HAVE BROUGHT TO THE ECONOMY.

IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND THAT I BELIEVE THIS LATEST COMMONWEALTH COMMITMENT TO TOWNSVILLE TAKES ON A PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE.

THERE WOULD BE SOME WHO WOULD PARTICULARLY APPRECIATE THIS DEVELOPMENT. AMONG OUR GUESTS TODAY IS LIONEL SAMPFORD - THE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS OF THE AUSTRALIAN ELECTORAL COMMISSION IN BRISBANE. HE WAS, I BELIEVE - AS THE THEN ELECTORAL RETURNING OFFICER FOR THE DIVISION OF HERBERT - A GUEST AT THE OPENING BY SIR REGINALD SCHWARTZ IN 1963 OF THE FIRST COMMONWEALTH BUILDING IN TOWNSVILLE.

HE WOULD UNDERSTAND AS MUCH AS ANYONE THE PARTICULAR PLEASURE I NOW HAVE IN FORMALLY DECLARING THIS NEW COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT CENTRE OPEN.
