



# PRIME MINISTER

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

TO THE ROTARY CONFERENCE  
SYDNEY - 9 NOVEMBER 1985

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

ROTARIANS

I AM INDEED PLEASED TO BE HERE TODAY AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF ROTARY DISTRICT 975. I UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR DISTRICT COVERS A GOOD STRETCH OF THE MAGNIFICENT NEW SOUTH WALES COASTLINE, FROM SOUTH OF THE HARBOUR TO KIAMA. COVERING SUCH AN AREA, I CAN APPRECIATE THAT ANNUAL CONFERENCES REPRESENT ONE OF THE FEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOME OF YOUR TWO AND A HALF THOUSAND MEMBERS, REPRESENTING OVER 50 CLUBS, TO MEET AND EXCHANGE IDEAS.

ON THIS OCCASION YOUR CHOICE OF THEME, THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE, IS AN IMMENSE AND DIVERSE TOPIC. BUT IT IS ONE WHICH IS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO OUR SOCIETY AND IS CERTAINLY AN ISSUE WHICH IS OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE GOVERNMENT AND TO MYSELF.

IN 1979, WHEN PRESENTING THE BOYER LECTURES, I ARGUED THAT OUR SOCIETY HAS BEEN, AND STILL IS BEING, OVERWHELMED BY CHANGES OF DIMENSIONS ALMOST BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION. IN THOSE LECTURES I QUOTED THE CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN THINKER KENNETH BOULDING, WHO STATED:

"THE WORLD OF TODAY IS AS DIFFERENT FROM THE WORLD IN WHICH I WAS BORN AS THAT WORLD WAS FROM JULIUS CAESAR'S. ALMOST AS MUCH HAS HAPPENED SINCE I WAS BORN AS HAPPENED BEFORE."

THIS OBSERVATION IS EVEN MORE RELEVANT TODAY THAN IT WAS SOME 6 YEARS AGO, IN 1979.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, WE ARE ALL AWARE THAT THE WORLD WE LIVE IN IS ONE OF RAPID CHANGE.

AND THE PROBLEMS THAT THIS CHANGE PRESENTS ARE NOT SOMETHING THAT CAN BE FIXED OVERNIGHT.

NOT TODAY, NOT TOMORROW.

AND TODAY I WOULD LIKE TO OVERVIEW MY GOVERNMENT'S INTEGRATED POLICIES ON THE PEOPLE WHO ARE GOING TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF OUR COUNTRY. YOUNG AUSTRALIA.

IT'S THIS GENERATION OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS THAT'S NOW COMING INTO THE WORKFORCE - THEIR BRAINS, THEIR ENERGY, THEIR ENTHUSIASM - THAT WILL LIFT THIS COUNTRY TO THE FRONT LINE OF THE WORLD'S INDUSTRIAL POWERS. WE MUST SETTLE FOR NOTHING LESS.

WE CAN NURTURE THE TALENT, THE ENERGY, THE VIGOR, THE CREATIVITY OF YOUNG AUSTRALIA ... OR WE CAN LET IT WITHER ON THE VINE.

AND I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THERE IS ANYONE HERE TODAY WHO WOULD CONTEMPLATE THE LATTER. FOR MANY OF YOU IN ROTARY HAVE BEEN - AND ARE - SO ACTIVE WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITIES AT ADDRESSING CHANGE AND YOUTH ISSUES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

THE GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS THAT COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH PROGRAMS ARE VITAL. I HEARTILY SUPPORT THE EFFORTS THAT YOU ARE MAKING IN THE GENERAL AREA OF ASSISTING YOUNG AUSTRALIANS, AND I UNDERSTAND THAT IN THIS DISTRICT LAST YEAR YOUR CLUBS SUPPORTED ABOUT 34 PROJECTS WHICH WERE EITHER EDUCATION RELATED, OR SPECIFICALLY AIMED AT YOUTH. I COMMEND YOUR EFFORTS.

MY GOVERNMENT ALSO BELIEVES THAT YOUNG PEOPLE MUST BE SUPPORTED, AND MUST BE GIVEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT THE EMPLOYMENT POSSIBILITIES THAT EXIST IN THE LABOUR MARKET. IN SHORT THEY MUST BE GIVEN ASSISTANCE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE MONUMENTAL CHANGES WHICH ARE OCCURRING IN OUR SOCIETY.

THE CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN THE ECONOMY, THE LABOUR MARKET AND SOCIETY AT LARGE OVER THE LAST DECADE HAVE HAD A CONSIDERABLE IMPACT ON THOSE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE SEEKING EITHER FULL OR PART-TIME WORK AND ON THOSE WHO ARE PURSUING FULL-TIME EDUCATION.

THERE HAS BEEN A RAPID DECLINE SINCE THE MID 1960'S IN ACCESS BY YOUNG PEOPLE TO FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT. BETWEEN 1966 AND 1983, THERE WAS A DECLINE OF ALMOST A THIRD IN THE NUMBER OF FULL-TIME JOBS HELD BY TEENAGERS, WITH MORE EXPERIENCED, BETTER-TRAINED ADULT WORKERS TAKING AN INCREASING SHARE OF AVAILABLE JOBS IN A COMPETITIVE LABOUR MARKET.

THE INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF PART-TIME WORK OVER THIS PERIOD HAS NOT OFFERED ANY REAL COMPENSATION, SINCE IT HAS LARGELY BEEN TAKEN UP BY YOUNG PEOPLE STILL IN EDUCATION. CURRENTLY, FOR EXAMPLE, TEENAGE SCHOOL STUDENTS ACCOUNT FOR BETWEEN 50 AND 60 PER CENT OF ALL PART-TIME JOBS HELD BY TEENAGERS.

THESE TRENDS HAVE BEEN EXACERBATED BY THE LACK OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRUCTURED VOCATIONAL TRAINING AVAILABLE FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS ONCE THEY ARE IN THE LABOUR MARKET.

THOSE YOUNG SCHOOL LEAVERS WHO ARE ABLE TO OBTAIN JOBS ARE INCREASINGLY FINDING THEMSELVES IN WHAT IS COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE "SECONDARY" LABOUR MARKET - THAT IS, IN LOW-PAID, UNSKILLED, OFTEN CASUAL WORK, OFFERING FEW PROSPECTS FOR SKILL ACQUISITION OR LONG-TERM CAREER ADVANCEMENT.

AT THE PRESENT TIME THERE ARE IN AUSTRALIA JUST OVER 2.6 MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 15 AND 24 YEARS OF AGE.

CLOSE TO 60 PER CENT OR 1.5 MILLION OF THEM ARE EMPLOYED. MORE THAN HALF A MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE AND ARE PURSUING FULL-TIME EDUCATION. THAT LEFT, AT JUNE THIS YEAR, ANOTHER 135,000 YOUNG MEN AND 95,000 YOUNG WOMEN UNEMPLOYED AND SEEKING FULL-TIME WORK ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL RECORDS, AND 40,000 YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN WERE UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR PART-TIME WORK.

THESE RAW FIGURES AND LABOUR MARKET CHANGES DO NOT REVEAL WHAT YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT MEANS IN TERMS OF THE LOSS OF HUMAN DIGNITY AND SELF RESPECT - OR WHAT IT MEANS IN TERMS OF THE BREAKUP OF FAMILIES AND SOCIAL ALIENATION OF A LARGE NUMBER OF THE BEST AND PROUDEST GENERATION WE HAVE EVER PRODUCED - OR WHAT IT MEANS IN TERMS OF THE DEFEAT OF HUMAN HOPE AND THE DEFEAT OF HUMAN SPIRIT. YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IS THE NEW POVERTY WITHIN OUR MIDST AND WE - AS YOUR GOVERNMENT - ARE DETERMINED TO REDRESS THIS LAMENTABLE SITUATION.

GIVEN THE CHANGES AND THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING YOUTH THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED ON AN INTEGRATED APPROACH - PRIORITY ONE.

THE GOVERNMENT IS ACUTELY AWARE THAT THE RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT AMONGST PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT COMPLETED SECONDARY SCHOOL OR GAINED ANY POST-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION IS TWICE AS HIGH AS THAT AMONGST THOSE WHO HAVE BETTER EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS. WE BELIEVE THAT EDUCATION AND TRAINING ARE THE KEYS TO BROADENING LABOUR MARKET PROSPECTS AND INCREASING THE EARNING CAPACITY OF INDIVIDUALS, AND ARE THE SUREST WAY OF PROVIDING IMPROVED ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

AS I ASSUME YOU ALL KNOW BY NOW, THE GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITY ONE YOUNG AUSTRALIA RESPONSE IS BASED ON THE ARGUMENT THAT:

- . EDUCATION MUST CONTINUE AS A WORTHWHILE AND USEFUL OPTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. IT MUST ALSO BE MADE MORE RELEVANT TO THE LARGE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WILL NOT BE GOING INTO ACADEMIA BUT WILL NEED TO BE HIGHLY SKILLED AND CAPABLE OF PLAYING VITAL ROLES IN OUR DEVELOPING AND CHANGING ECONOMY.
- . EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING MUST BE STRUCTURALLY COMBINED SO THAT YOUNG PEOPLE CAN ADEQUATELY MAKE OR BEGIN TO MAKE A SMOOTH TRANSITION INTO THE WORLD OF WORK AND MAKE SENSIBLE CHOICES FOR THEIR SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM CAREERS.

- . INCOME SUPPORT SCHEMES SHOULD BE IMPROVED AND RATIONALISED SO THAT THOSE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE DISADVANTAGED AND, AS A RESULT, HAVE THEIR RANGE OF OPTIONS CONSTRAINED, SHOULD HAVE MORE EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITIES, AND
- . SINCE ALMOST INEVITABLY THERE WILL BE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE LEFT UNEMPLOYED, UNSUPPORTED AND LACKING IN LIFE SKILLS, THERE SHOULD BE PROVISIONS WHICH ASSIST LOCAL COMMUNITY EFFORT TO HELP THESE YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE POINT WHERE THEY TOO CAN REALISE THEIR POTENTIAL.

I AM SURE THAT YOU ARE AWARE OF OUR COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPING AN AUSTRALIAN TRAINEESHIP SYSTEM AS A MAJOR FORM OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, WHO, FOR WHATEVER REASON, HAVE NOT COMPLETED THEIR SECONDARY SCHOOLING, OR PROCEEDED TO HIGHER EDUCATION, OR GONE INTO A TECHNICAL OR TRADE TRAINING POSITION.-

THE OBJECTIVE FOR THIS FINANCIAL YEAR IS TO GENERATE 10,000 TRAINEESHIPS, WITH PLANS FOR A PROGRESSIVE EXPANSION TO REACHING AN INTAKE LEVEL OF 75,000 IN THE YEAR 1988-89. WE WILL BE LOOKING TO DEVELOP UP TO 20 PER CENT OF INITIAL TRAINEESHIP POSITIONS IN OUR OWN FIELDS OF EMPLOYMENT.

TRAINEESHIPS ARE A SUBSTANTIAL GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO NOTHING LESS THAN A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE EXISTING AVENUES OF TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK.

THE GOVERNMENT ALSO RECENTLY ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION TO SUBSTANTIALLY UPGRADE THE COMMUNITY YOUTH SUPPORT SCHEME (CYSS) - A SCHEME IN WHICH MANY ROTARIANS HAVE MADE SUCH AN INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION. WE WILL SPEND \$32 MILLION ON THIS SCHEME IN 1985-86, AN INCREASE OF 23 PER CENT OVER 1984-85. IT IS ESTIMATED THAT 85,000 UNEMPLOYED YOUNG PEOPLE WILL BE ASSISTED UNDER THE PROGRAM IN 1985-86. THIS UPGRADING OF CYSS REPRESENTS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S "PRIORITY ONE" POLICY STRATEGY, WHICH IS DIRECTED AT IMPROVING THE LABOUR MARKET PROSPECTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE. IN ADDITION THE GOVERNMENT WILL INCREASE FUNDING FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS UNDER ITS COMMUNITY YOUTH SPECIAL PROJECTS PROGRAM (CYSP) BY 58 PER CENT DURING 1985-86.

THE SUCCESS OF THESE PROJECTS IN GETTING YOUNG PEOPLE BACK INTO EMPLOYMENT OR FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IS A TRIBUTE TO THE DEDICATION OF THEIR SPONSOR ORGANISATIONS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING LOCAL EMPLOYERS, MANY OF WHOM ARE ACTIVE IN ROTARY CLUBS THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA.

HOWEVER THE MAGNITUDE OF THE YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM AND THE CHANGES CONFRONTING YOUNG AUSTRALIANS ARE SUCH THAT THEY WILL NOT BE FULLY OVERCOME UNLESS EMPLOYERS, UNIONS, GOVERNMENTS, TRAINING ORGANISATIONS AND THE COMMUNITY, ALL CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER IN A CONSTRUCTIVE MANNER. IN THESE TIMES OF RAPID CHANGE, WE MUST ALL SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO GENERATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH. I BELIEVE THAT ROTARY HAS ALWAYS DEMONSTRATED A COMMITMENT TO YOUTH AS PART OF ITS BROADER COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY SERVICE, AND IN THIS RESPECT I BELIEVE THAT ROTARY IS "AHEAD OF THE FIELD" IN TERMS OF RESPONDING TO THIS CHALLENGE OF CHANGE.

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TO ADDRESS YOUR COUNCIL  
CONFERENCE, AND FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY. I CONGRATULATE YOUR  
ORGANISATION FOR THE GOOD WORK SO MANY OF YOU ARE DOING  
WITHIN YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, AND I WISH YOU WELL WITH  
THE REMAINDER OF YOUR CONFERENCE AND IN YOUR FUTURE  
ENDEAVOURS.

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