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PRIME MINISTER

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**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL DAY, EXPO
BRISBANE - 18 JUNE 1988**

Sir Edward Williams
Sir Llew Edwards
Graham Richardson
Bill Glasson
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen

We are now halfway through our Bicentennial year, and have witnessed a spectacular series of celebrations, the likes of which will not be seen again in this country for a very long time.

Some of these events have been the result of years of careful planning, have a high public profile, attract significant international participation and generate world wide attention. Others have been organised at a community level, built simply on the enthusiasm and commitment to Australia of its citizens.

World Expo 88 stands out amongst other Bicentennial events because it exhibits all of these characteristics.

Expo 88 has brought together 36 nations, 2 international organisations, 150 corporations, as well as all the Australian States and mainland Territories, to share with us their lifestyles, their cultures and their technological achievements. The tremendous public response since the gates opened shows Expo has clearly struck a chord in the community.

The results of the dedication and energy of Llew Edwards, Ned Williams, and their staffs are here for all to see.

I was delighted to see Llew's tireless efforts for Expo were recognised recently with his nomination as Queenslander of the Year.

Today I pay special tribute to Tom Veivers, the Commissioner-General of Australia's Pavilion, and all those who have helped to bring the concept of the Australian Pavilion to reality.

The Australian Pavilion celebrates what being an Australian means, through a kaleidoscope of images of Australian life and the land drawn from the present day and the past.

Through the Bicentennial celebrations, the Australian community is increasingly coming to recognise that for more than 40,000 years before 1788 there existed in this land a human civilisation of remarkable sophistication and adaptability.

So I am particularly impressed by the Rainbow Serpent theatre in the Pavilion, which is a stunning interpretation of the Aboriginal cultural heritage.

It was a tremendous privilege to see at first hand at the Barunga Festival in the Northern Territory last weekend the strength and resilience of Aboriginal culture.

World Expo 88 has attracted many visitors from around the world. As Prime Minister I extend a very warm welcome to all who are visiting Australia to share this great celebration of human achievement. Please feel at home during your stay with us.

We expect two million international visitors to come to Australia during 1988 - twice the number of overseas tourists who visited Australia in 1983.

The tourism industry's ability to generate employment and foreign exchange earnings make it an important contributor to the Australian economy, and one which will play a significant role in our future prosperity.

Tourism is also significant in a less tangible sense.

While Expo 88 is bringing the world to Australia, it is also giving Australians the opportunity of showing the world the qualities of our country and our national character.

On its national day at Expo, Australia is proudly showing the world what we are capable of: not just our culture, our lifestyle, our landscape, our sport and leisure activities but our industry, our political freedoms, our new technology, our plans for the future.

It is an inestimable pleasure and privilege to be Prime Minister during our Bicentennial year - to know that we are showing all this to the world not just on a special day like today, our national day at Expo, but every day of the year.

Millions of overseas tourists, and millions of Australians, are seeing an enduringly important transition underway in this country - the emergence of a new, competitive, vigorous economy capable of securing sustainable prosperity for all its citizens as we enter our third century.

That is the best message of Australia's National Day and it is one which I have great pride in passing on to you and in urging you in turn to pass on to your work colleagues, your friends and your family when you return home.
