



PRIME MINISTER

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ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING, MP
TO THE OLYMPIC TEAM DINNER - SHERATON WENTWORTH, SYDNEY,
25 AUGUST 1992

Ladies and gentlemen

An honour to be here in such illustrious company - the most successful Australian Olympic team in thirty years.

Twenty seven medals. Fifty two medallists.

Any number of personal bests. High rankings in events where Australians have never before excelled.

A performance which gives us grounds to believe that we're entering another golden age of Australian sport - and the performance of the Rugby Union side in Capetown, and the cricket team in Sri Lanka is further evidence.

I have to say that in those two cases, as in Barcelona, there was something more than winning attached to the performance.

There was character.

In the last two months Australia's sportsmen and women have been outstanding ambassadors for their country.

There have been ample measures of both brilliance and grit.

A terrific sense of purpose and awareness of what the spirit of sport is all about.

It's a truism that Australians love their sport.

In fact I think it goes further than that - I think Australians see in sport the things they value.

Like courage, comradeship - competition. Winning.

We value winning - when Kieran Perkins swam that magnificent 1500 metres, Kathy Watt, Matt Ryan, Clint Robinson, the Equestrian Team, the Double Sculls, the Oarsome Foursome - when they won, Australians won too.

We shared their triumph.

All those medallists did us a bit of good.

So did some of those terrific fourths - like Michael Murphy.

And so did a lot of other great performances, including some desperately unlucky ones like David Green's.

The point is, I think, that it is not the winning which really moves us.

It beats losing, there's no doubt.

But what really moves us I think is the belief that the athlete embodies.

The belief we know you had to have to go so far.

We are moved by your faith in yourselves.

Your spirit.

The fact that you are Australian and you have this spirit - this world-conquering spirit - moves us.

It's why we honour you tonight.

You have been great ambassadors. You have done us proud.

More than that, you have set us an example.

You remind us of the spirit in this country - that made it a great country, that will assure our future.

So I know I speak for all Australians when I congratulate you - and thank you, and wish you the very best of luck in everything you do.

SYDNEY
25 AUGUST 1992