



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, M.P.
SYLVIA SMITH'S ELECTORATE OFFICE - LAUNCESTON, TASMANIA
SATURDAY 26 FEBRUARY, 1994**

It is a great pleasure to be here with Sylvia (Smith) to open this, her electorate office, in the city of Launceston because it was on that night, just slightly less than a year ago, that we saw Tasmania lead the return of a Labor government. And, when I saw the numbers in the Tasmanian seats, given the fact that we had a substantial lead anyway, I knew then we were always going to be unbeatable. As it turned out, that's as it turned out to be. But, the truth is that we now want to earn that faith and trust which you put in Sylvia and the government, through the course of this parliament, to see again the great things that Labor can do for Australia, and to see return to the fold all of the Tasmanian seats at the next election.

Tasmania, of course, is playing its part in the recovery which we are now seeing in the Australian economy. We are now growing faster than any other comparable economy and we'll be doing well growing around four percent into next year. And, I'm very pleased to see Tasmania taking a part in this, sharing in this, in fact in some places, leading it. And, today, just coming from Hobart, as I did, through Richmond and then Ross, up to Evandale, seeing the tourist industry of Tasmania obviously playing a role selling Tasmania's heritage as it does - because the preservation of this wonderful city and the places I mentioned is, I think, second to none in Australia. But, what also pleased me this morning, I went through a fish export factory and, not so many months ago, one at Ulverstone exporting potato chips. And, when you look at the amount of industry and innovation which is taking place with Tasmanian companies picking up the competitiveness which this government has now induced in Australia... we're seeing Tasmania not just hanging behind the recovery but being right in there with it.

And that will mean, as we're already seeing, employment start to pick up and we're starting to see, I think, 145,000 job growth over the course of the last six months or so, so we're well on the way to the half million jobs in three years having kept the nearly two million of extra jobs which were created in the 1980s. So, we've had the recession, we're out of it, we're on our way again and we've kept the great social programs of the Labor party intact while we've been doing it. That is, Medicare and the education system and support for aged people and for young people and for families - we've been able to hold that together, now, as we contemplate the nineties. And the nineties hold such bounty for Australia, now, as a low inflation country locked into the Asia-Pacific, able to export our products and, in fact, for the first time in our

history being closer to fast growing world markets where, for most of our history, we were a long way from the markets of Europe and North America. So, now we are part of the fastest growing part of the world and we're right in there with it.

Now, of course, that couldn't be done, we couldn't realise the great ambitions we've had through the eighties in setting Australia up as a modern society and economy, without getting this period of office, this term of office, to give us a chance to ride the growth cycle through the 1990s. And, you've helped give us this term of office by sending Sylvia to Canberra as Member for Bass. Now, Sylvia said she is a woman of the people. She gets around and she knows the electorate and she knows the community. And this is what the Labor party always has, it has touch with the community because it is from the community. And, that is why it has taken a Labor government to give Australia a market economy, it's taken a Labor government to enlarge the country and give it a greater future, it's taken a Labor government to see the great opportunities in Asia and, at the same time, see our whole society grow along... so that this recovery is not just for stockbrokers or people at the top end of town, this recovery is a recovery for everybody and that includes the unemployed and the long term unemployed and all Australians who ought to be able to participate in it.

Now, I said at the election, on election night, that we were not going to forget the unemployed. That we were going to reach out our arms and bring them up with us so we could go on to growth and prosperity in the 1990s. And, in this half year coming up towards this Budget, I'll be introducing a statement dealing with the problems of the long term unemployed and long term unemployment. And, let's, us, do something new in the world - first in the world, again - to say that in our society, in our compassionate society, we will not leave three or four hundred thousand Australians long term unemployed. That the rest of us won't move on and forget them, that we'll go along as a society together. Because, only in that way will we keep this a nice country which has got good values where we care about one another and where we say, when we move along we all go along, not just those who are well off.

So, these are the great things we're fighting for, these are the great things we've been elected for. And, we've now got a healthy, strong parliamentary majority and, for the first time in a long time, the state of Tasmania playing a real role through the Labor members in the Federal government of Australia. Now, it was 20 years ago when it was thus, last like this. But, now Tasmania has rejoined the fold and as a consequence Tasmania is getting the lift from the policies of the national government. And this has got to help in general prosperity, in employment in this beautiful state. So, ladies and gentlemen, Sylvia has already distinguished herself in the time she has been in the parliamentary Labor party, she is a person of the people, she has that common touch, she cares. And that input to the policies of the government, to the business of the caucus of the party, is what makes all the difference in whether you've got a real political party in office or just a business organisation which the Liberal Party is and always has been - a sort of semi-business organisation. Not a feeling, growing, organic political organisation with touch to the community of this country.

So, I had a lot of pride on election night, none more so than seeing Tasmania return a swag of Labor members. And, amongst them, Sylvia, whom I share this platform with today with very great pride. So, could I thank each and every one of you for coming

along, for supporting her, for believing in her, for having faith in the government and faith in the great ideals of the Labor party. And let's hope, from the portals of this office, that the great humanitarian policies of the party and its great sense of enlargement can be accomplished here in Launceston. It gives me very great pleasure to declare Sylvia's electorate office open.

Ends.