



## PRIME MINISTER

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER THE HON P J KEATING MP  
LUNCH FOR THE PM'S XI v THE WEST INDIES, MANUKA OVAL,  
CANBERRA, 5 DECEMBER 1995**

### **E&OE PROOF COPY**

Thanks very much indeed John (Gallop). Can I just recognise Richie Richardson and Michael Bevan, Denis Rogers, Wesley Hall, Andy Roberts, Steve Bernard and ladies and gentlemen.

What a pity we are at this point in the day. I thought we would be going well because my experience with these matches has been that we have mostly had good weather. It is a pretty safe time of the year in Australia, but with the weather patterns the way they are, nothing is safe any more it seems. At any rate, the clouds have lifted somewhat and I am hoping against hope that we might get five hours or something like that in. In which case, we would not have seen the day go to waste.

I know this is an important day for the ACT Cricket Association because it is one of its fund raising days amongst other things, but I know it wants to keep up this tradition of the Prime Minister's XI and so do I. Particularly for our colleagues from the West Indies and this being their first match of the tour, they pay us a great honour indeed in being part of the Prime Minister's XI and coming last evening and today to play our side and in doing that, of course, they have done it quite a few times over the years. I was just looking through the book "The Prime Minister's XI" by Don Selth there on the table, we have seen a number of them here in the past. Wes Hall, I think, back in the 1960s and Richie, of course, was here in 1992. So, they are no strangers to this place and we have kept the tradition going. Being the first fixture of the tour for them, I hope that they can limber up in a sense this afternoon.

I would like to underline how important the West Indies are in the world of Australian cricket - of world cricket - and, of course, a measure of their greatness is the fact that only after two decades did Australia manage to win back the Frank Worrell Shield. There is a great sense of euphoria here and, I think, that they have set the standard in cricket by which other countries judge themselves. That is, the measure of someones euphoria is really

whether they can climb over the top of you. When they know how hard that is to do, they rate themselves by comparing themselves with you.

Australian cricket, of course, has been riding high over recent times. Perhaps not yesterday, but mostly and our team has been performing very well under Mark Taylor and we have got many and very talented cricketers knocking on the door of the Test team. But we have got a long way to go before we achieve that special status which the West Indies have had in dominating international cricket so totally and for so long.

It has always been a great wonder to me that from the Caribbean, those relatively small states and populations like Barbados with a population roughly the size of Canberra or Antigua with a population roughly akin to some of our provincial centres, yet it produces this huge number of international ranked people and it really is quite exceptional. We were just talking about my home town of Bankstown, how many cricketers we have produced from there and how many swimmers and the rest, well, there is Bankstown and the rest of Australia and I suppose there is Barbados and Antigua and what have you. I know what it is like to produce all these stars ... Though we are very proud of our cricketing stars from that part of the world, we have never turned out the number of fast bowlers that you have and your success in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s was founded on that magnificent fast bowling. We have got Curtley Ambrose and Courtney Walsh here today, of course, to show us some of their form if we get an opportunity.

It is a great pleasure for me to be here as Prime Minister with Wes Hall and Andy Roberts in our company as Team Manager and Coach. Of course, they were household names in Australia and great draw cards and they kept that contact with cricket and, of course, the other thing I have in common with Wes is he is a polly, a politician. So, he knows about all of the other undercurrents going on out there too. We were just talking a bit earlier about how politicians immediately pick up the pulse of a crowd or a circumstance or a place and no doubt, this has put him in good stead - with instinct it has put him in good stead in cricket and in public life. At any rate, it is great to have them both here with us and again we appreciate very much their commitment.

Could I express my appreciation particularly to the Australian Cricket Board and to the ACT Cricket Association in organising what has obviously been a well organised event, other than the weather. If my predecessor was still here, he would have been a better chance on that too and a couple before that could ... But, I am only an ordinary politician and so I can only say thank you for the organisation that you have obviously displayed here and just in the year since the renovations and the extra facilities out the front, of course, are going to make it a much better place to organise cricket into the future.

I would like to thank the players, Richie Richardson and his side and Michael Bevan and our side with many substantial young people coming through cricket and the great opportunity for them to be up against such a quality side and I thank them both. Of course, this stand has been called after the great Don Bradman and I, as a former finance minister and Treasurer of this

country, you get a bit of a penchant for statistics, but whenever the statistics are brought out about Bradman, he distinguishes himself so obviously in cricket world history. It was nice we had a \$5 commemorative coin in his name punched and we were able to use it today. The Mint is still hanging on to it though and they won't let them have it. They are very thingy about the currency here. They make their money under a thing called seigniorage this is a little trick they have about what it costs to produce the money and the difference in its face value. So, given the fact that it never costs that much to produce these coins, they could give a few away. But, I don't think we are going to get hold of the Don Bradman coin today. We did ask Don to come over on this occasion, given that the coin was struck in his honour. We all take opportunities to remember his great life as a cricketer and his great life as a world sportsman and as an Australian sportsman, but he wasn't able to come for reasons, family reasons and others. It would have been nice to have had him, but we understand.

So, can I just conclude by thanking you all - the Australian Cricket Board and the ACT Cricket Association particularly. I thank you for keeping up the tradition of the PM's XI. I am glad also my parliamentary colleagues could be with us, from the Opposition and also mine in the Government and we can - all of us - if we get some opportunity here, keep increasing the record book that we have on the table and keep alive this very important tradition. I'd like to propose a toast to our West Indies guests, if someone could pass over my drink. To just say thank you and wish you all the best on this tour.

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