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PRIME MINISTER

SUPERMARKET TO ASIA COUNCIL

The Prime Minister's Supermarket to Asia Council met today for the second time.

The Council welcomed Mrs Fay McGuigan as its newest member. Mrs McGuigan is a great achiever in our wine industry and has been instrumental in increasing Australia's exports. Fay is an excellent addition to the Council.

The clear feeling of the Council is that it should be action focussed rather than simply holding more reviews.

To this end, the Council agreed to measures to get our goods into the Asian markets.

A number of working groups have been established which will devise action plans to achieve greater exports. They will identify key problems and the solutions required. Government and industry can then work together to implement the necessary reforms.

As Chairman of the Council, I tabled a proposal to make Australian producers aware of the high value specialist product opportunities that exist in Asia and how we may benefit from these. The Government is very keen to increase opportunities for our producers to diversify into new products and new markets which better meet Asian tastes. This will also broaden regional Australia's economic base and encourage further growth and employment.

For example, Queensland prawn producers are now diversifying into live Kuruma prawns specifically for the Japanese market. At \$80 per kg wholesale, they are the most expensive prawns in the world. While this diversification is starting to occur, there is clearly much greater potential.

The Government remains strongly committed to the Supermarket to Asia Council. It is a forum which will provide significant opportunities for Australia, most especially regional Australia. It will bring new opportunities, new jobs and new investment. It is an integral part of our plan to rebuild regional Australia and I look forward to future successes.

18 December 1996

Attendees of the Second Meeting of the Supermarket to Asia Council

The Hon John Howard, MP

The Hon Tim Fischer, MP

The Hon John Anderson, MP

The Hon John Sharp, MP

The Hon John Moore, MP

Senator the Hon David Brownhill

Senator the Hon Bob Woods

Mr Paul Bourke

Mrs Fay McGuigan

Mr Jo De Bruyn

Professor Adrienne Clarke

Mr Malcolm Irving

Mr Donald McGauchie

Mr Reg Clairs

Mr Murray Rogers

Mr David Mortimer

Mr George Kailis