

OPENING OF MATTARA FESTIVALNEWCASTLE, N.S.W.1st September, 1967Speech by the Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Holt

My Lord Mayor,
Alderman Bell,
The Princess of Mattara, 1966, my greetings, and
My congratulations in advance to Princess of Mattara, 1967,
My greetings to all the Distinguished Visitors present, and
To you, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Boys and Girls,

This is for me quite a unique occasion because although it is your 7th Mattara Festival it is my first and I am delighted to have the honour of being with you, (I understand with the duty of formally declaring the Festival open), and I hope I do not forget to do so by speaking too long, but also to be with you on what represents part of what has occurred to me to be a very balanced diet of living as one finds it here in this rapidly developing city of Newcastle. Because you now rank as the sixth urban area in point of size in the Commonwealth of Australia, only surpassed in size by five of the capital cities and I suspect that you will catch up with one or two of those before you are much older.

Earlier today as I flew around the city with the Lord Mayor, I found him very knowledgeable, pointing out to me all the important developments which were occurring here. I could not fail to appreciate the significance which Newcastle occupies in the life of this great Commonwealth of ours. Not only are you ranking sixth in numbers but in industry, significant in the diversity of your industries both of the engineering industrial type and on the land with a wine industry which commands a premium price around Australia. You have here one of the most critically important areas of the whole of the Commonwealth of Australia.

But proving that men and women do not live by bread alone or even wine alone you have developed this happy Festival, this Mattara Festival, the Mattara I understand signifying the hand of friendship, and if there is one characteristic which we regard as typical of the Australian, it is his capacity for mateship, for feeling at one and happy with his fellow citizen, and your Festival here tonight appears to symbolize that spirit which we prize so much in our national character.

Now it is not my purpose to detain you at length when you have such greater attractions in the young ladies I have been seeing backstage to come before you and accept the judgment of those who have been set that difficult task.

But I do express the hope that just as the years which have gone have marked a most remarkable development in Newcastle that here you have developed a civic and community spirit which I believe not only puts a stamp of individuality upon your community but marks you out as one of the great thriving enterprising areas of the nation as a whole.

Because with that you have also developed this festive balance to the otherwise more sombre and serious aspects of life, I hope that this 7th Mattara Festival will prove to be the most distinguished, the most festive, the most happy of all those which have made up the series. And it is with good wishes to you all, the hope that you can go on as a community from strength to strength thriving, prospering and in happiness together that I now in anticipation congratulate the winner of your Princess Mattara contest and at the same time formally declare this Festival open.