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AUSTRALIA DAY

Message from the Prime Minister, Senator John Gorton

This is a day of special significance for us all. It is our day, chosen to commemorate the arrival of the First Fleet one hundred and eighty years ago when the settlement of the colony of New South Wales began.

It is a reminder that we are a very young country in terms of history, but it is also a reminder that, in so short a time, we have come a very long way.

We have every reason to be proud of our achievements. We are an independent, sovereign nation of nearly twelve million people, loyal to the Crown as a Federation of States which achieved its status by constitutional means.

We have strong allies and many friends. We have made great strides in national development and we have an almost limitless prospect ahead of us.

Today we are caught up in historic changes of tremendous importance to us all. The challenge to populate this continent and develop its vast resources is insistent. It is everybody's task, and in pursuing our objectives of peace, security and prosperity, we cannot stand aside from the wider world.

The historic events which are changing the defence and security pattern in South-East Asia, and the prolonged conflict in Viet Nam make this a testing time for us all. The road ahead will not be easy, but we are equipped to make the journey, provided we make the effort.

National development in the broadest sense is the first of our priorities. This gives us the capacity we must have to pull our weight in the community of nations. This gives us the strength we need, and the pace of our development is the measure of that strength.

We must not rest on our past. We must look forward, we must be energetic and we must be adventurous.

CANBERRA,
26 January, 1968