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NEW YEAR MESSAGE TO THE NATION

From the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

New Year's Day is a fitting time to take stock : to note what Australia has achieved; and to consider what improvements and new achievements are needed.

We have finished the old year greater in numbers and with more material development than ever before. Most of us enjoy a standard of living and a way of life that few other countries in the world can equal. But many improvements are needed.

Australians engaged in many rural industries are in economic straits due to no fault or dereliction of their own. Helping to solve this national problem must be our great task in the New Year.

We are threatened, too, with the risk of money inflation - illusory increases in money wages which will buy no more unless more is produced to buy - an inflation which in the long run benefits no one and hurts everyone in the Nation. Combating this will be another great task in the New Year.

If we all think in terms of producing more during each hour worked so that there will be more to divide between the worker, the employer, the old, and the nation's demand for improved social action and further development of all kinds - then the New Year can see us beating inflation and improving real living standards.

We must push ahead with the task of further developing our natural resources with the highest possible degree of Australian ownership. We must encourage the growing public interest in the preservation of our environment. We must continue to attack poverty wherever it is found - and it is not found only among some of those who draw pensions.

We must continue to encourage self-expression and creative activity in the arts. We must continue to help our less fortunate neighbours. I believe these are the goals the nation should strive towards in the New Year.

There will be discussion, and divided opinion on how best to move towards this achievement. I hope that such discussion will be rational, restrained and productive - and that whatever the conflicting views on how to attain our goals there will be little division in the Nation as to the proper goals for which we should strive.

If we can do this, then I believe the New Year will see our further advance as a nation and will prove to be that what I wish you all --

A Happy New Year.

CANBERRA
31 December 1970