



PRIME MINISTER

VISION VALLEY OPENING

N.S.W.

Speech by the Prime Minister, The Rt Hon. William McMahon, C.H., M.P.

3 June, 1972.

The Reverend Alan Walker, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When Alan Walker asks me to do something for one of the many projects which spring from his fertile mind, it isn't easy to say 'no'. I have known him for a long time and I admire him in the work he is doing in the name of his church for people in all walks of life.

So when he asked me to open "The Vision Valley Project" this afternoon, I could'nt say 'no'. It is a great personal pleasure, Alan, for my wife and me to be here and for me to say a few words about this project.

You have "reached for the stars", and here in this valley you and your colleagues have built a "Country Club" with a difference. This Centre will bring relief to young and old from the stifling life of the crowded city of Sydney. And in this way it will help to refresh the moral and spiritual values of our own community. In many ways I believe we can look upon it as a pathfinder for others. Its conception alone is inspiring and its practical value will be unlimited. It will give direct expression to some of the things my Government wants to secure for the Australian people. Among these is the development of a quality of life in Australia which has as its symbol and standard, excellence in all things, and an end to poverty so far as it is within the power of mortal men, to achieve.

There are tasks ahead in the seventies for all of us - tasks which require us to share in a concerted national effort to protect the Australian environment - not only from the man-made pollution of the air and the water, and the desecration of our great and unique natural assets, but from the diseases of society which flow from crowded living and the tensions and pressures of contemporary life. Vision Valley will make a notable contribution to that effort.

I spoke the other day of Government plans to expand the work of the National Health and Medical Research Council, and of our wish to do something more in the nursing home and home care fields.

..2/

These are examples of a strong and continuing desire on the part of my Government to join with others in dealing with the social problems of the day, and to do our best to give to every man, woman and child in the Australian community the security and dignity that is theirs by right as citizens of this wonderful country.

We will not rest in this task. Some of what we do can be measured in money terms and in the shape of buildings against the sky. But a lot, too, depends on the research we make possible; on the guidance we can give, and on the goodwill of the Central Missions of many faiths which we can foster.

I think it is one of the remarkable aspects of Australian life that so much is being achieved by voluntary effort - and by the gift of time and ideas and enthusiasms by a great legion of Australians who are inspired to do things in humanity's name. I hope it will always go on for it is one of the ennobling characteristics of any nation.

Alan, I congratulate you and your fellow workers of the Methodist Central Mission - on the example you set and the leadership you give.

Some of you may ask "What is the Government giving in hard cash to this project?" The honest answer is that it is not giving anything directly, because under the acts of Parliament as they stand we cannot spend the taxpayers' money in this way. But indirectly I want to tell you that we are helping, and I believe, helping significantly. We are doing this by tax deductability for donations of \$2 and over to the project, and our contributions to projects run by the Methodist Central Mission which do qualify under existing acts of Parliament.

This, of course, does allow the Mission to divert more of its own funds to exciting and original new projects like Vision Valley. And so many of you will know the Central Methodist Mission supports many socially significant and essential projects. There is its famous Lifeline Service, its homes for the aged and chronically ill and its aid to the physically and mentally handicapped so that they can be helped to find a useful place with dignity in our society. Homes for the aged and chronically ill and the handicapped do come under the acts I have referred to. And over the years the Commonwealth Government has given just over half a million dollars - \$574,000 to be precise - to the Methodist Central Mission for its nursing homes, hostels and home units for the aged.

Now, under another act of Parliament - under the Sheltered Employment Assistance Act - we propose to give another substantial sum to the Methodist Central Mission.

Mr Chairman, I have pleasure in announcing that my Government will grant the sum of \$137,000 for the Mission's Sheltered Workshop at the Lifeline Centre in Rydalmere. This will be for the direct assistance of disabled people. It will, as I explained before, also help to improve the development of Vision Valley by freeing other funds for this project.

Mr Chairman, many people who are sorely troubled will come to this Valley and find comfort and hope. Others will find it a place to rest from their labours, and others, too, will find it a place to refresh their spirit and body in healthy surroundings.

All of them, I am sure, will find a new communion in life which will make them happier people.

It is for these reasons I feel privileged to be here today, and to officially declare this Centre open.
