

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. E.G. WHITLAM, Q.C., M.P.,
FOR THE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION HUMAN RIGHTS DAY, A.N.U.,
CANBERRA, 10 DECEMBER, 1973

TODAY IS THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE
UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

THAT DECLARATION HAS COME TO BE RECOGNISED AS ONE OF
THE GREAT ENLIGHTENED EVENTS IN MODERN HISTORY. ITS ANNIVERSARY
MARKS THE BEGINNING OF AN EQUALLY HOPEFUL AND ENLIGHTENED
MOVEMENT, FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS ALSO DECIDED TO LAUNCH
ON THIS DAY A DECADE FOR ACTION TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION. IT IS IN THE CONTEXT OF THESE TWO GREAT
ACHIEVEMENTS - THE CELEBRATION OF ONE HISTORIC ERA AND THE
INAUGURATION OF ANOTHER - THAT I WISH TO SPEAK TO YOU OF
AUSTRALIA'S PART IN FURTHERING THE CAUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS FOR
THE WORLD'S PEOPLE.

IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR ME, IN DOING SO, TO POINT TO
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE POLITICAL PARTIES ON THIS ISSUE. I HOPE
YOU WILL UNDERSTAND MY PURPOSE IN DOING SO, I HAVE NO WISH
TO BE OVERTLY PARTISAN, BUT I CANNOT EXPLAIN THE POLICIES OF
THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WITHOUT DRAWING ATTENTION TO THOSE OF
OUR PREDECESSORS. IT WILL BE SEEN, IN MANY CASES, I BELIEVE,
THAT THE RECORD OF OUR PREDECESSORS WAS ONE OF NEGLIGENCE AND
INACTION, AND IN THIS CRUCIAL AREA OF FOREIGN POLICY, NEGLIGENCE
AND INACTION CANNOT BE TOLERATED. THE STRUGGLE FOR UNIVERSAL
HUMAN RIGHTS IS A PROTRACTED AND PERHAPS AN UNENDING STRUGGLE.

THERE IS RARELY A TIME IN WORLD AFFAIRS WHEN SOME NEW THREAT TO HUMAN RIGHTS - SOME NEW OPPRESSION, SOME NEW FORM OF DEPOTISM - IS NOT ABROAD. GOVERNMENTS HAVE A CONTINUING OBLIGATION TO DO ALL IN THEIR POWER TO PROMOTE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. NO COUNTRY HAS A GREATER OBLIGATION IN THIS REGARD THAN AUSTRALIA, A MEDIUM POWER ENJOYING CLOSE AND CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH MANY DIFFERENT COUNTRIES WITH DIFFERENT POLITICAL SYSTEMS.

IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVE OF THE LABOR GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE THAT AUSTRALIA'S POLICIES ARE SOUNDLY BASED ON RESPECT FOR, AND ON THE PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF, CIVIL LIBERTIES AND BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS. WE BELIEVE THAT POLICIES AND ATTITUDES TO HUMAN RIGHTS CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM ACTION AGAINST THE EVILS OF DISCRIMINATION IN ANY FORM, INCLUDING DISCRIMINATION BASED ON RACE. OUR POLICIES AND ACTIONS OVER THE PAST YEAR HAVE BEEN DELIBERATELY DESIGNED TO GET AWAY FROM THE TENTATIVE AND DILATORY ATTITUDES OF THE PAST. THE RECORD OF OUR PREDECESSORS WAS MARKED BY A LACK OF ANY SENSE OF INITIATIVE IN THE PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN OUR OWN COMMUNITY AND IN THE WORLD AT LARGE. THEY WERE HALF-HEARTED IN RESPONDING TO THE WORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS, AND THEIR LACK OF ENTHUSIASM WAS USUALLY MATCHED IN THE RESPONSE OF THE STATES.

LET ME GIVE A TYPICAL EXAMPLE. AS A RESULT OF AN OBLIGATION ARISING FROM THE 1946 AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION CONSTITUTION, THE LABOR GOVERNMENT IN 1947 INSTITUTED AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE AUSTRALIAN AND STATE DEPARTMENTS OF LABOUR TO CARRY OUT AN ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE WHOLE RANGE OF LABOUR MATTERS AROUND APRIL OF EACH YEAR. THIS MACHINERY WAS IN EXISTENCE THROUGHOUT THE TERM OF OFFICE OF OUR PREDECESSORS BUT IT WAS ONLY WHEN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT CAME TO POWER THAT THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR, MR. CLYDE CAMERON, TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO USE THIS MACHINERY TO GIVE ACTIVE ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE RATIFICATION AND APPLICATION OF I.L.O. CONVENTIONS. MR. CAMERON HAS MOVED QUICKLY TO ESTABLISH CONSULTATIVE MACHINERY WITH THE STATES AT MINISTERIAL, PERMANENT HEAD, AND TECHNICAL OFFICER LEVEL TO DETERMINE AN ORDER OF PRIORITY FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF CONVENTIONS AND TO ENSURE THAT ACTION IS TAKEN ON THESE CONVENTIONS REGARDED AS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION.

OUR PREDECESSORS MADE THE FEDERAL SYSTEM A FARCE BY USING IT AS AN EXCUSE TO JUSTIFY ITS OWN INACTION. THEY DID LITTLE OR NOTHING TO STIMULATE ACTION ON THE PART OF THE STATES. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY AVOIDED THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN RESPECT OF I.L.O. CONVENTION No. 100 - EQUAL REMUNERATION, 1951, BY HIDING BEHIND THE CHANGES OF MINDS ON THE PART OF TWO OF THE STATES TOWARDS RATIFICATION AND THE UNWILLINGNESS OF THE OTHER STATES TO AGREE TO RATIFICATION. IT IS TRUE THAT BECAUSE OF THE FEDERAL SYSTEM AUSTRALIA IS AT A DISADVANTAGE IN BEING FACED WITH UNNECESSARILY COMPLICATED PROCEDURES FOR GIVING EFFECT TO INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS. THESE DEFICIENCIES IN OUR

SYSTEM SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO BESMIRCH AND AFFRONT AUSTRALIA'S IMAGE. OUR GOVERNMENT HAS ACCORDINGLY FOUND IT NECESSARY TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE EXTERNAL AFFAIRS POWER IN THE CONSTITUTION TO GIVE EFFECT TO OUR INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS.

TO MY MIND, THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION IS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT AND ENLIGHTENED ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS. THE CELEBRATION OF THIS ANNIVERSARY AFFORDS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO RE-DEDICATE ITSELF TO THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA; THE ASSOCIATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY WITH THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION DATES FROM THE DRAFTING OF THE DOCUMENT IN WHICH DR. EVATT, AS MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL, TOOK A CLOSE PERSONAL INTEREST. HE WAS PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHEN THE DECLARATION WAS ADOPTED. HE SAID ON THAT OCCASION THAT THE DOCUMENT "WAS BACKED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE BODY OF OPINION OF THE UNITED NATIONS AS A WHOLE AND MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN ALL OVER THE WORLD WOULD TURN TO IT FOR HELP, GUIDANCE AND INSPIRATION." THROUGHOUT MY PARLIAMENTARY CAREER I HAVE TAKEN A KEEN PERSONAL INTEREST IN ALL ASPECTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN PARTICULAR IN THE PROGRESS MADE BY AUSTRALIA TOWARDS RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS AGREEMENTS.

ONE OF MY EARLIEST ACTIONS AS PRIME MINISTER WAS TO INITIATE AN EXAMINATION OF ALL THE INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS CONCERNED WITH HUMAN RIGHTS TO DETERMINE THE ACTION WE SHOULD BE TAKING TO GIVE EFFECT TO THEM. WE SIGNED THE TWO UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COVENANTS ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS AND ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS ON 18 DECEMBER 1972. THE COVENANTS COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER AND WERE ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN 1966. IT IS THE INTENTION OF THE GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED TO SIMULTANEOUS RATIFICATION OF THEM AS SOON AS ENABLING LEGISLATION HAS BEEN PASSED BY PARLIAMENT.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION IS A FOCUS OF ATTENTION FOR THE ASPIRATIONS OF ALL NATIONS AND PEOPLES CONCERNED WITH BASIC RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS. THOUGH THE DECLARATION HAS INFLUENCED THE LEGAL STANDARDS OF OTHER COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD IN SUCH DOCUMENTS AS THE CANADIAN BILL OF RIGHTS, 1960, AND THE BASIC LAW OF THE GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC, 1949, EXISTING LAWS IN AUSTRALIA HAVE NOT ADEQUATELY PROTECTED THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF THE INDIVIDUAL AS SET OUT IN THE DECLARATION. THE GOVERNMENT IS ACTING TO CORRECT THIS SITUATION. ON 21 NOVEMBER THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL, SENATOR LIONEL MURPHY, INTRODUCED INTO THE PARLIAMENT, THE HUMAN RIGHTS BILL 1973 AND THE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION BILL 1973. BOTH BILLS ARE DESIGNED TO EXTEND AND SAFEGUARD THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF EVERY AUSTRALIAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS BILL WILL GUARANTEE THAT EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO THE EQUAL PROTECTION OF THE LAW AND TO CERTAIN BASIC RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, CONSCIENCE AND RELIGION; FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION; FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION; FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT; THE RIGHT TO VOTE AND TO EXERCISE PUBLIC FUNCTIONS ON A BASIS OF EQUALITY; THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY; FREEDOM FROM ARBITRARY ARREST AND DETENTION; THE RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL; AND FREEDOM FROM CRUEL OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT. TO SAFEGUARD THE PROTECTION OF THESE RIGHTS, THE BILL ESTABLISHES THE OFFICE OF A HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER. HIS TASK WILL BE TO EXAMINE ANY BREACHES OF INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY IN THIS COUNTRY AND WHERE NECESSARY TO BRING LEGAL ACTION TO ENSURE THAT THE LAW WITH REGARD TO FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS IS ENFORCED.

MANY AUSTRALIANS TAKE THE EXISTENCE OF THESE RIGHTS FOR GRANTED. THEY HAVE NOT APPRECIATED THE NEED FOR ACTION TO ENSURE THAT THE RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED AND GUARANTEED WITH THE FULL FORCE OF LAW. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS BILL IS THAT IT WILL MAKE THESE BASIC RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS LEGALLY ENFORCEABLE IN AUSTRALIA. THE INDIVIDUAL WILL BE ABLE, THROUGH THE COURTS, TO INSIST UPON HIS RIGHTS.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS BILL ALSO SEEKS APPROVAL FOR RATIFICATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN (1952). AUSTRALIA HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY BECOME A PARTY TO THIS CONVENTION BECAUSE THERE ARE STATUTORY LIMITATIONS AND DISCRIMINATORY ASPECTS OF VARIOUS STATE LAWS IN AUSTRALIA WHICH DO NOT COMPLY WITH ITS PROVISIONS. THE ABILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO RATIFY THIS CONVENTION WILL BE A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN THROUGHOUT OUR COMMUNITY ON EQUAL TERMS WITH MEN WITHOUT ANY DISCRIMINATION.

THE FIRST ARTICLE OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS PROCLAIMS THAT "ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE BORN FREE AND EQUAL IN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS". ARTICLE 2 STATES THAT "EVERYONE IS ENTITLED TO THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS SET OUT IN THE DECLARATION WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF ANY KIND, INCLUDING DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF RACE, COLOUR OR NATIONAL ORIGIN". THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ELABORATED ON THESE ARTICLES WHEN, IN 1965, IT ADOPTED AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION. THE CONVENTION RECOGNISES THAT ANY DOCTRINE OF SUPERIORITY BASED ON RACIAL DIFFERENCE IS FUNDAMENTALLY FALSE, MORALLY INDEFENSIBLE AND WITHOUT ANY SOCIAL JUSTIFICATION. SEVENTY-FIVE COUNTRIES HAVE SO FAR BECOME PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON WHICH OUR RACIAL DISCRIMINATION BILL IS BASED. AS PROVIDED UNDER CLAUSE 6, AUSTRALIA WILL RATIFY THE CONVENTION AS SOON AS THE BILL IS APPROVED.

THE PASSAGE OF THIS BILL AND THE RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION WILL BE AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION, WHICH AUSTRALIA CAN MAKE TO THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN THE DECADE BEING INAUGURATED TODAY. THE GOVERNMENT IS ALREADY WELL PLACED TO PARTICIPATE POSITIVELY IN THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE BY THE STAND WE HAVE TAKEN IN THE UNITED NATIONS IN FORCEFULLY CONDEMNING ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND BY OUR VOTES CONDEMNING THE POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF APARTHEID AND COLONIALISM.

THE HUMAN RIGHTS BILL AND THE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION BILL ARE OF SPECIAL INTEREST AND RELEVANCE TO ALL SECTIONS OF OUR COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY OUR ABORIGINAL AND MIGRANT COMMUNITIES WHO HAVE SUFFERED VARIOUS FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION. THE BILLS ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA AND THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE MIGRATED TO THIS COUNTRY ARE TRULY EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW AND ARE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN AUSTRALIAN LIFE ON EQUAL TERMS WITH THE REST OF THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY. THE BILLS COMPLEMENT THE POLICIES WHICH WE ARE ENDEAVOURING TO PURSUE IN ESTABLISHING ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS AND IMPROVING THE GENERAL WELL-BEING OF THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY.

A MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN HUMAN RIGHTS WAS THE DECLARATION BY THE GOVERNMENT THIS YEAR OF A NATIONAL POLICY TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION. MR. CAMERON ANNOUNCED THIS POLICY IN A STATEMENT IN THE PARLIAMENT IN MAY CONCERNING THE ACTION BEING TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO RATIFY THE I.L.O. CONVENTION No. 111 ON DISCRIMINATION (EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION) 1958. AUSTRALIA RATIFIED THIS CONVENTION ON 15 JUNE.

THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO ELIMINATE DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION HAS THE SUPPORT OF ALL STATE GOVERNMENTS, MAJOR EMPLOYER ORGANISATIONS AND THE TRADE UNIONS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ESTABLISHED COMMITTEES ON DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL AND IN ALL STATES. STEPS HAVE ALREADY BEEN TAKEN TO LAUNCH A NATION-WIDE EDUCATION CAMPAIGN AIMED AT INFLUENCING COMMUNITY ATTITUDES IN ORDER TO REMOVE DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES IN EMPLOYMENT.

A MAJOR ROLE OF THE COMMITTEES IS TO INVESTIGATE COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION AND TO DEAL WITH THEM EFFECTIVELY. THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION HAS THE SPECIAL FUNCTION OF ADVISING THE GOVERNMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL EDUCATION PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE REAL EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN EMPLOYMENT.

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA OWE A CONSIDERABLE DEBT TO THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION FOR ITS WORK IN DEVELOPING POSITIVE POLICIES WHICH PAY FULL RESPECT TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FIELDS OF EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION. IN ADDITION TO THE CONVENTION ON DISCRIMINATION (EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION) AUSTRALIA HAS ALSO RATIFIED TWO OTHER IMPORTANT HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTIONS OF THE I.L.O. DURING THE YEAR:

CONVENTION No. 87 - FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT TO ORGANISE, 1948;

CONVENTION No. 98 - RIGHT TO ORGANISE AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, 1949.

THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW CLOSE TO FULFILLING ITS OBJECTIVE OF RATIFYING ALL THE I.L.O. CONVENTIONS IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THERE REMAIN OUTSTANDING CONVENTION No. 100 EQUAL REMUNERATION, 1951, AND CONVENTION No. 107 - PROTECTION AND INTEGRATION OF INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL POPULATIONS, 1957. THE GOVERNMENT IS GIVING PRIORITY ATTENTION TO THE RATIFICATION OF THESE TWO CONVENTIONS.

THE FURTHER ACTION WHICH THE GOVERNMENT IS ABLE TO TAKE IN REGARD TO THE RATIFICATION OF I.L.O. CONVENTION No. 100 WILL DEPEND UPON THE CONSIDERATION OF THE NATIONAL WAGE CASE WHICH WILL SOON COME BEFORE THE AUSTRALIAN CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION COMMISSION. CONVENTION No. 107 IS CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THE QUESTION OF ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS WHICH IS CURRENTLY THE SUBJECT OF STUDY BY THE COMMISSION HEADED BY MR. JUSTICE A.E. WOODWARD. THE WOODWARD COMMISSION HAS COMMENTED IN ITS

PRELIMINARY REPORT THAT IT IS IMPORTANT THAT NO ACTION BE TAKEN TO PREJUDICE EVENTUAL AUSTRALIAN RATIFICATION OF CONVENTION No. 107 WHICH EMPHASISES THE RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHT TO OWNERSHIP BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE LANDS THEY TRADITIONALLY OCCUPY.

THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO AIMING IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO MAKE FURTHER ADVANCES IN BRINGING WORK STANDARDS IN AUSTRALIA UP TO THE HIGHEST INTERNATIONAL, INDUSTRIAL AND SOCIAL LEVELS. THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR IS CONSULTING WITH THREE STATE GOVERNMENTS ABOUT THE REMOVAL OF HINDRANCES TO AUSTRALIAN RATIFICATION OF CONVENTION No. 81, LABOUR INSPECTION, 1946. CONSULTATIONS ARE ALSO CONTINUING BETWEEN OFFICERS OF AUSTRALIAN AND STATE DEPARTMENTS TO DETERMINE WHAT STEPS MIGHT BE NEEDED TO INTRODUCE LEGISLATION IN AUSTRALIA TO COMPLY WITH CONVENTION No. 135, PROTECTION AND FACILITIES AFFORDED TO WORKERS REPRESENTATIVES, 1971, WHICH CAME INTO FORCE ON 30 JUNE THIS YEAR, AND ON CONVENTION No. 119 - GUARDING OF MACHINERY, 1963.

I AM ALSO PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO ANNOUNCE TODAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOW COMPLETED ALL THE NECESSARY PROCEDURES TO ENABLE US TO RATIFY IMMEDIATELY THE CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF STATELESS PERSONS 1954, THE CONVENTION ON THE REDUCTION OF STATELESSNESS 1961, THE PROTOCOL RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES 1966, AND THE PROTOCOL RELATING TO REFUGEE SEAMEN 1973.

AUSTRALIA ACCEDED TO THE CONVENTION ON THE STATUS OF REFUGEES IN 1954. ON 18 APRIL THIS YEAR THE GOVERNMENT RATIFIED THE 1957 HAGUE AGREEMENT RELATING TO REFUGEE SEAMEN, WHICH HAD COME INTO FORCE IN 1961. THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO TAKING ACTION IN REGARD TO THE PROTOCOL RELATING TO THE 1960 UNESCO CONVENTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION WHICH AUSTRALIA RATIFIED ON 29 NOVEMBER 1966. THE GOVERNMENT HAS INSTITUTED ACTION TO DETERMINE WHETHER AUSTRALIA SHOULD ACCEDE TO THE 1962 PROTOCOL TO THIS CONVENTION, THE PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF WHICH IS TO ESTABLISH MACHINERY TO DEAL WITH VIOLATIONS OF THE CONVENTION.

THE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION AND THE RATIFICATION OF UNITED NATIONS AND I.L.O. AND UNESCO CONVENTIONS HAS BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY VIGOROUS GOVERNMENT ACTION IN OTHER FIELDS AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF EVERYONE WHO LIVES IN AUSTRALIA.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN PROMOTING EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND IN IMPROVING THEIR CONDITIONS OF WORK. IN THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE THE GOVERNMENT HAS SET STANDARDS FOR OTHER EMPLOYERS TO FOLLOW. FOR EXAMPLE, THE PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDES EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN AND HAS RECENTLY EXTENDED THE PROVISIONS FOR MATERNITY LEAVE TO 12 WEEKS PAID LEAVE. TO ENABLE WOMEN TO PURSUE THEIR CAREERS IN A CONTINUOUS FASHION AND MAKE A GREATER CONTRIBUTION TO THE LABOUR FORCE, THE PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD IS CURRENTLY EXAMINING ASPECTS OF PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT IN THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE.

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT IN THE AREA OF WOMEN'S
EMPLOYMENT INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING MEASURES:

- . SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTION IN DECEMBER 1972 IN PROCEEDINGS BEFORE THE AUSTRALIAN CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION COMMISSION TO HAVE ESTABLISHED THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE. CONSULTATIONS WITH STATE GOVERNMENTS HAVE LED TO MOST STATES AGREEING TO THIS PRINCIPLE.

- . THE PROVISION OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN WISHING TO ENTER OR RE-ENTER THE LABOUR FORCE AFTER A PERIOD OF DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITY. THIS IS PROVIDED UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT TRAINING SCHEME FOR WOMEN ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR.

- . THE RANGE OF BENEFITS PROVIDED UNDER THIS SCHEME IS CURRENTLY BEING EXAMINED WITH A VIEW TO FACILITATING FURTHER THE ENTRY OF WOMEN TO THE LABOUR FORCE AND IMPROVING THEIR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

- . PROVISION FOR ALLEGATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT ON THE GROUNDS OF SEX TO BE INVESTIGATED THROUGH THE SETTING UP OF COMMITTEES ON DISCRIMINATION IN EMPLOYMENT AND OCCUPATION.

THROUGH ITS IMMIGRATION PROGRAM, THE GOVERNMENT HAS ACTED TO REMOVE ANY SUGGESTION OF DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF RACE, COLOUR OR NATIONALITY.

UNDER THE REVISED POLICY, ALL PEOPLE WHO CAN MEET SELECTION CRITERIA ARE ELIGIBLE EQUALLY FOR SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA. THE MAIN EMPHASIS OF THE PROGRAM IS NOW ON FAMILY REUNION AND THE NATIONAL NEED. AUSTRALIA'S CITIZENSHIP LEGISLATION HAS BEEN AMENDED SO THAT IT NOW APPLIES WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION TO PEOPLE FROM ALL COUNTRIES. VISITOR VISA REQUIREMENTS ALSO HAVE BEEN STREAMLINED TO PROMOTE INTERCHANGE AND GOODWILL BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES. A NATIONAL COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND TASK FORCES IN THE STATES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED TO ENQUIRE INTO ALL ASPECTS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MIGRANTS. IN THE LIGHT OF THESE AND OTHER ENQUIRIES, THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NECESSARY TO END DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES.

IN THE SHORT SPACE OF TWELVE MONTHS, THE GOVERNMENT HAS TRANSFORMED AUSTRALIA'S INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION SO THAT OUR COUNTRY HAS ONCE AGAIN ASSUMED ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE VANGUARD OF COUNTRIES PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND IN INSISTING ON THE HIGHEST INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS IN EMPLOYMENT AND IN INDUSTRY. MY COLLEAGUES IN THE MINISTRY HAVE CO-OPERATED WITH ENTHUSIASM AND IMAGINATION TO HELP ME MAKE 1973 THE MOST PRODUCTIVE YEAR OF ACHIEVEMENT WHICH AUSTRALIA HAS EVER HAD IN THESE VITAL FIELDS. WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED OUR SINCERITY IN FULFILLING OUR COMMITMENTS TO BRING ABOUT GREAT IMPROVEMENTS IN THE BASIC RIGHTS OF AUSTRALIANS.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO FACED SQUARELY THE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE OF MATCHING THE POLICIES AND ACTIONS WE ADOPT AT HOME WITH THOSE WE PURSUE ABROAD.

WE HAVE SHOWN BY THE STAND WE HAVE TAKEN, PARTICULARLY IN THE UNITED NATIONS, THAT AUSTRALIA'S POLICIES ARE FIRMLY BASED ON HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES OF RACIAL EQUALITY, MUTUAL RESPECT AND THE ELIMINATION OF THE EVILS OF POVERTY, ILLITERACY, DISCRIMINATION AND COLONIALISM.

AUSTRALIA PAYS TRIBUTE TODAY TO THE CONTINUING CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN PROMOTING UNIVERSAL RESPECT FOR, AND OBSERVANCE OF, FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

ON 20 APRIL 1972 IN A DEBATE IN THE HOUSE ON RACIAL PREJUDICE AND VIOLENCE I SAID THAT IN 1968, HUMAN RIGHTS YEAR, AND IN 1971, THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR ACTION TO COMBAT RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, THE UNITED NATIONS QUOTED THE CONVENTIONS WHICH AUSTRALIA HAD NOT IMPLEMENTED. ON THAT OCCASION I OBSERVED THAT WE HAD NOT IMPROVED OUR RECORD. BY OUR ACTIONS THIS YEAR THE GOVERNMENT HAS ENSURED THAT AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL IMAGE WILL NEVER AGAIN BE AFFRONTED BY A POOR RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT IN GIVING EFFECT TO INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES.

I HOPE I MAY BE FORGIVEN FOR CONCLUDING ON A PERSONAL NOTE BY RECALLING THAT MY FATHER, H.F.E. WHITLAM, CONTRIBUTED TO THE WORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD AS AUSTRALIA'S REPRESENTATIVE AT THE 6TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IN 1950 AND AT THE 10TH SESSION IN 1954. HE ALSO ACTED AS A CONSULTANT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR SEVERAL YEARS ON HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS. WHEN HE DELIVERED THE FIRST SIR ROBERT GARRAN ORATION IN 1959, HE REFERRED TO THE GENERAL OBLIGATION AND RESPONSIBILITY OF AUSTRALIA "TO SHARE IN THE TASK OF SECURING HIGHER STANDARDS AND BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS, NOT ALONE FOR HER PEOPLE, BUT FOR PEOPLE IN OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD". HE SAID:

"THE FOUNDATION FOR THAT OBLIGATION AND RESPONSIBILITY WAS LAID WHEN, IN THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS, AUSTRALIA, IN COMPANY WITH OTHER NATIONS, REAFFIRMED HER FAITH IN THE DIGNITY AND WORTH OF THE HUMAN PERSON AND EXPRESSED HER DETERMINATION TO PROMOTE SOCIAL PROGRESS AND BETTER STANDARDS OF LIFE IN LARGER FREEDOM, AND LATER, WHEN SHE SUBSCRIBED TO THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ARTICLE 1 OF WHICH SETS FORTH THAT ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE FREE AND EQUAL IN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED WITH REASON AND CONSCIENCE AND SHOULD ACT TOWARDS ONE ANOTHER IN A SPIRIT OF BROTHERHOOD."
