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EMBARGO: 7.00 P.M.

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. E.G. WHITLAM, O.C., M.P.,
FOR THE OPENING OF THE SENIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AT THE CANBERRA COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION,
MONDAY, 4 MARCH 1974

I WELCOME THE INAUGURATION OF THIS IMPORTANT COURSE
IN THIS IMPORTANT SUBJECT AT THIS IMPORTANT INSTITUTION.

IF I HAVE ONE COMPLAINT AGAINST AUSTRALIAN
INSTITUTIONS OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IT IS THIS: THEY HAVE
BEEN REMARKABLY SLOW TO RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF PRACTICAL
TRAINING IN GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION. I CAN
ILLUSTRATE THIS BY RECALLING MY OWN DAYS AS A STUDENT.
IN THOSE DAYS, AND INDEED UNTIL QUITE RECENTLY, THERE
WERE PLENTY OF COURSES IN POLITICAL SCIENCE BUT NO COURSES
IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT; THERE WERE COURSES IN MEDICINE BUT
NONE IN HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION; THERE WERE COURSES IN
EDUCATION BUT NONE IN UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION. THERE
WAS A STRONG TEMPTATION - AND I SUSPECT THERE IS A TEMPTATION
NOW - TO REGARD THESE PRACTICAL SUBJECTS AS THE PROVINCE OF
AMATEURS, BENEATH THE DIGNITY OF THE TRUE SCHOLAR AND A WASTE
OF TIME FOR THE BORN LEADER. YET TODAY, IF WE TAKE THOSE
SAME THREE CONTEMPORARY DISCIPLINES - LOCAL GOVERNMENT,
HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION AND UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION - WE
FIND COURSES READILY AVAILABLE IN UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES
THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA.

IT IS A MEASURE OF THE IMPORTANCE NOW ACCORDED TO SUCH STUDIES, A RECOGNITION OF THE GROWING COMPLEXITY AND SOPHISTICATION OF MODERN GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION, THAT WE ARE INAUGURATING THIS SENIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AT THE CANBERRA COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATIONx

TWO WEEKS AGO I SPOKE TO MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTE OF MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION IN MELBOURNE AND GAVE AN ACCOUNT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES ON BEHALF OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTx IT STRUCK ME THAT SO MUCH OF MY GOVERNMENT'S HOPES AND AMBITIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPENDED NOT JUST ON WHAT GOVERNMENTS CAN DO, BUT ON THE CALIBRE AND EXPERIENCE OF THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO ADMINISTER CITIES, SHIRES AND MUNICIPALITIES FROM DAY TO DAYx IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES SHOULD BE RUN BY PEOPLE WITH RIGOROUS PRACTICAL TRAINING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATIONx THIS IS NO TASK FOR THE AMATEUR OR THE DILETTANTEx WE ACCEPT THE IMPORTANCE OF SYSTEMATIC STUDIES FOR THE PROFESSIONAL MAN, AND THE BUSINESSMANx WHY HAS IT TAKEN SO LONG TO RECOGNISE THAT SUCH TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT, FOR THE LEADER IN PUBLIC LIFE AS WELL AS FOR THE LEADER IN COMMERCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE?

THIS COURSE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT COULD HARDLY HAVE COME AT A MORE OPPORTUNE TIME. THE YEAR AHEAD WILL BE AN EVENTFUL ONE - PERHAPS A FATEFUL ONE - FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN AUSTRALIA. I DON'T THINK ANY OF YOU WOULD QUARREL WITH THE EMPHASIS MY GOVERNMENT HAS GIVEN TO BETTER LOCAL GOVERNMENT OR DOUBT THE STRENGTH OF OUR RESOLVE IN THIS FIELD. WE WANT TO ELEVATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE AS A FULL AND EQUAL PARTNER IN THE FEDERAL SYSTEM. IT IS NOT SIMPLY A MATTER OF PROVIDING MORE MONEY, THOUGH MORE MONEY IS CERTAINLY NEEDED. WE ARE CONCERNED - AS YOU ARE - WITH THE TRUE STATUS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS ULTIMATE IMPACT ON OUR LIVES. IF OUR REFERENDUM IS CARRIED NEXT MAY - AND THERE SHOULD BE LITTLE NEED FOR ME IN THIS COMPANY TO EXPLAIN OUR REFERENDUM PROPOSALS - THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WILL BE EMPOWERED TO RAISE MONEY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES AND TO DISTRIBUTE THAT MONEY IN DIRECT DEALINGS BETWEEN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMONWEALTH. IN THAT WAY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF THE NATION. ITS ESSENTIAL PLACE AS THE THIRD TIER OF GOVERNMENT WILL BE ENTRENCHED IN THE CONSTITUTION FOR THE FIRST TIME. WE WILL BE ABLE TO BALANCE THE FUNCTIONS AND FINANCES OF THE THREE DIVISIONS OF GOVERNMENT AND MAKE POSSIBLE A RATIONAL CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN THEM.

ALREADY MY GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN SEVERAL PRACTICAL STEPS TO PLACE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ON A MORE SECURE FOOTING. ONE OF OUR FIRST ACTIONS LAST YEAR WAS TO WIDEN THE CHARTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH GRANTS COMMISSION TO ENABLE IT TO HEAR APPLICATIONS FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGIONS FOR GRANTS UNDER SECTION 96 OF THE CONSTITUTION. IN THIS WAY WE HOPE TO MAKE THE COMMISSION AS EFFECTIVE IN REDUCING INEQUALITIES BETWEEN REGIONS WITHIN THE STATES AS IT HAS BEEN IN REDUCING INEQUALITIES BETWEEN THE STATES THEMSELVES. THE FIRST APPLICATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE HAVE BEEN RECEIVED AND HEARINGS WILL BEGIN SHORTLY. OUR SECOND INITIATIVE WAS TO SEEK A VOICE AND A VOTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ON THE LOAN COUNCIL. WE RAISED THIS PROPOSAL - A PROPOSAL CONSISTENT WITH THE POLICY OF THE LABOR PARTY AND OUR MANDATE FROM THE PEOPLE - AT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION LAST SEPTEMBER; AND I REMIND YOU THAT IT WAS AT THE EXPRESS INSISTENCE OF MY GOVERNMENT THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT WERE ADMITTED TO THAT CONVENTION. WE RAISED THE PROPOSAL AGAIN AT A SPECIAL CONFERENCE OF THE PREMIERS IN OCTOBER. THE INABILITY OF THE PREMIERS TO REACH UNANIMITY ON OUR PROPOSAL OBLIGED US TO SEEK A REFERENDUM - A REFERENDUM TO REMOVE ALL CONSTITUTIONAL OBSTACLES TO THE RATIONAL CO-ORDINATION OF LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN AUSTRALIA.

I AM FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT UNLESS THAT REFERENDUM IS CARRIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN AUSTRALIA WILL REMAIN IN ITS PRESENT STRAIT-JACKET, ITS PRESENT STATE OF PERMANENT FINANCIAL CRISIS, A POOR RELATION OF STATE GOVERNMENTS THAT LACK THE MEANS TO GIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT THE RESOURCES IT NEEDS. WE CAN GIVE LOCAL GOVERNMENT THE MEANS TO DO ITS JOB. WE CAN GIVE IT THE STATUS AND AUTONOMY IT DESERVES. WE CAN ENSURE ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE - NOT AS AN APPENDAGE OF THE STATES, NOT AS AN APPENDAGE OF THE COMMONWEALTH - BUT AS AN EQUAL PARTNER WITH BOTH IN THE FEDERAL SYSTEM. NO ONE KNOWS BETTER THAN YOU PEOPLE IN THIS ROOM, AND ESPECIALLY THE DEDICATED MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE UNDERTAKEN THIS FIRST COURSE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AT THIS COLLEGE, THE FRUSTRATIONS AND DIFFICULTIES OF THE CAREER YOU HAVE CHOSEN. I BELIEVE THAT IF YOUR CAREERS ARE TO BE FULLY REWARDING, IF YOUR STUDIES AT THIS COLLEGE ARE TO BE TRULY MEANINGFUL AND VALUABLE TO YOU AND SOCIETY, THEN TOGETHER WE MUST WORK FOR A NEW DEAL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT - A NEW DEAL THAT WILL ENSURE ITS FIRM PLACE IN THE CONSTITUTION AND IN THE FEDERAL SYSTEM.

I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE REAL FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ITS REAL SUCCESS, ITS RELEVANCE AND ADAPTABILITY, ITS POPULARITY, ITS ABILITY TO INVOLVE CITIZENS AND TO ENGAGE THEIR EFFORTS AND SYMPATHIES, WILL DEPEND LARGELY ON THE PEOPLE WHO ADMINISTER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ON A DAILY BASIS. LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED DIRECTLY WITH OUR EVERYDAY LIVES. NOWHERE ELSE DO WE FIND SUCH INTIMATE LINKS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNED. IN NO OTHER AREA OF GOVERNMENT ARE THERE SUCH DIVERSE AND GROWING DEMANDS ON THE SERVICES PROVIDED AND

THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO PAY FOR THOSE SERVICES. THE RESULTING DEMANDS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATORS - ON THEIR SKILLS, THEIR EXPERIENCE, THEIR INGENUITY - WILL INCREASE AS RAPIDLY AS THE DEMANDS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT ITSELF.

THAT IS WHY I WELCOME THE INITIATIVE FOR THIS COURSE AT THE CANBERRA COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION. I SHOULD EMPHASISE THAT IT IS NOT AN "ACCREDITATION COURSE" FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS SUCH AS THE MITCHELL COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION PROVIDES IN NEW SOUTH WALES OR THE ROYAL MELBOURNE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IN VICTORIA. IT IS IN NO SENSE AN ATTEMPT TO MUSCLE IN ON COURSES THAT STATE INSTITUTIONS ARE ALREADY PROVIDING. IN FACT IT IS A MODEL OF THE WAY THAT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS CAN AND SHOULD BE ORGANISED. NATIONAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS HAVE ALL HAD A PART TO PLAY IN ARRANGING THIS COURSE. THE FIRST INITIATIVE CAME FROM THE INSTITUTE OF MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION IN 1970. IT BEGAN LOOKING FOR A TERTIARY INSTITUTION TO MOUNT COURSES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT. THE RESPONSE CAME FROM THIS COLLEGE - A BODY FUNDED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT. NOW, IN ORDER TO PLAN AND ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM, AN ADVISORY COUNCIL HAS BEEN FORMED REPRESENTING NATIONAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND ALL OTHER ORGANISATIONS CONCERNED. THE INSTITUTE OF MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION, THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENGINEERS, HEALTH SURVEYORS, PRIVATE BUSINESSMEN, STATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, THE DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE CAPITAL TERRITORY AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF URBAN STUDIES - ALL ARE REPRESENTED ON THE ADVISORY COUNCIL.

I DOUBT IF A MORE COMPREHENSIVE ASSEMBLY OF STATE, LOCAL AND NATIONAL AGENCIES HAS BEEN BROUGHT TOGETHER FOR A SINGLE PURPOSE IN SUCH A READY SPIRIT OF CO-OPERATION.

I CONGRATULATE ALL THOSE WHO HAVE ORGANISED THIS COURSE, BUT THERE ARE TWO MEN IN PARTICULAR WHO DESERVE OUR GRATITUDE. THE PROGRAM OWES MUCH TO THE INITIATIVE OF MR. ANDREW WALLS, A FORMER TOWN CLERK OF BOX HILL AND NOW A MEMBER OF THE GRANTS COMMISSION; AND MR. TOM WORSLEY, CONVENOR OF THE COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED BY THE INSTITUTE OF MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION IN 1970 TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INSTITUTE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT STUDIES. YOU ARE FORTUNATE ALSO IN HAVING THE SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION OF THE INSTITUTE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT STUDIES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM. YOUR INITIAL PLANS ARE FOR TWO COURSES A YEAR WITH 25 PLACES IN EACH. THERE ARE, IN FACT, 27 PEOPLE PARTICIPATING IN THE FIRST COURSE. THAT IS A MOST GRATIFYING RESPONSE.

I AM GLAD TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT, FROM NEXT YEAR, WILL BE CONTRIBUTING \$12,000 A YEAR IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COURSE. THE COLLEGE HAS ACCEPTED THE DEPARTMENT'S SUGGESTION THAT, DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF THE COLLEGE, PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO USING THE MONEY TO ENSURE AN ADEQUATE REPRESENTATION AT COURSES BY OFFICERS FROM SMALLER AREAS; A GENERAL REDUCTION IN THE COST OF THE COURSE WHERE PRACTICAL; AND PROVISION OF FUNDS FOR VISITING LECTURERS OR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES. ANY FUNDS ALLOCATED BY THE COLLEGE FOR SCHOLARSHIP ATTENDANCE OR FOR PROVIDING VISITING LECTURERS WILL BE KNOWN AS DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIPS.

CERTAINLY YOU CAN RELY ON MY GOVERNMENT'S ACTIVE ENCOURAGEMENT AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT. BUT WHAT I FIND TRULY HEARTENING IS THAT THE INITIATIVE FOR THIS COURSE CAME FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT ITSELF. IT IS SYMBOLIC, PERHAPS, OF THE NATIONAL IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT THAT THE COURSE SHOULD BE PROVIDED HERE, IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT COLLEGES OF ADVANCED EDUCATION ARE UNIQUELY EQUIPPED, WITH THEIR MORE FLEXIBLE PROGRAMMING ARRANGEMENTS, TO PROVIDE COURSES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION. THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS NOW ASSUMED TOTAL FUNDING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION, INCLUDING POLYTECHNICS. THE GOVERNMENT'S FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION IN THE 1973/75 TRIENNIUM IS MORE THAN \$600 MILLION.

WE BELIEVE THE COLLEGES CAN WIDEN THE RANGE OF TERTIARY EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES, WITH A STRONG BIAS TOWARDS THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE STUDIES UNDERTAKEN. IN THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW COURSES - OF WHICH THIS COURSE IS A GOOD EXAMPLE - THE COLLEGES AND STATE AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES HAVE PLACED PROPER EMPHASIS ON KNOWN INDUSTRIAL AND SOCIAL NEEDS. I HOPE THAT THERE WILL SOON BE COURSES AVAILABLE, NOT ONLY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT, BUT IN GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION AT ALL LEVELS.

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YOUR OWN EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC LIFE, NO LESS THAN MINE, HAS SHOWN HOW INCREASINGLY COMPLEX, SOPHISTICATED AND DIFFICULT THE PRACTICE OF GOVERNMENT HAS BECOME IN MODERN TIMES. IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT THIS COURSE WILL DO MUCH TO REDUCE THOSE COMPLEXITIES AND REMOVE THOSE DIFFICULTIES, IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT YOUR STUDIES WILL MAKE FOR MORE EXPERT AND EFFICIENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE, I HAVE GREAT PLEASURE IN DECLARING OPEN THIS FIRST SENIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AT THE CANBERRA COLLEGE OF ADVANCED EDUCATION.
