

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER,  
THE HON. E.G. WHITLAM, Q.C., M.P.,  
TO THE ITALIAN COMMITTEE OF COORDINATION  
FOR THE LAUNCHING OF ITALIAN WEEK 1975  
MELBOURNE, SATURDAY, 31 AUGUST 1974.

IT IS A RARE PLEASURE IN 1974 TO BE LAUNCHING ITALIAN WEEK 1975. I WISH WE COULD PLAN POLITICAL EVENTS WITH THE SAME CERTAINTY. THIS IS THE FIRST IMPORTANT FUNCTION OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY I HAVE ATTENDED IN MELBOURNE SINCE BECOMING PRIME MINISTER. IT WILL CERTAINLY NOT BE THE LAST.

AUSTRALIANS NEED NO REMINDER OF THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY TO OUR SOCIETY. WE ACKNOWLEDGE IT; WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR IT. IT IS IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, TO PROVIDE THE FULLEST OPPORTUNITY FOR CONTACTS BETWEEN OLD AUSTRALIANS AND THE ITALIAN COMMUNITY - AND BETWEEN ITALY AND AUSTRALIA THEMSELVES IN THE FIELDS OF ART, CULTURE, EDUCATION AND COMMERCE. ITALIAN WEEK THEREFORE HAS A VALUABLE FUNCTION. THERE IS NO OTHER COMPARABLE NATIONAL CELEBRATION IN THIS COUNTRY. IT IS FITTING THAT WE SHOULD HONOUR THE LARGEST AND THE OLDEST OF THE EUROPEAN MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE BRITISH, NO MIGRANT IS MORE ACCEPTED, MORE RESPECTED OR MORE ADMIRER THAN THE ITALIAN.

AUSTRALIA'S LINKS WITH ITALY GO BACK TO THE BEGINNINGS OF EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION ON THIS CONTINENT. THE FIRST ITALIANS TO SET FOOT ON AUSTRALIAN SOIL MAY WELL HAVE BEEN ANTONIO PONTO AND JAMES MARIO MATRA, BOTH OF WHOM SAILED IN CAPTAIN COOK'S "ENDEAVOUR". IN 1793 THE TUSCAN MARQUIS ALESSANDRO MALASPINA LED AN EXPEDITION WHICH ENTERED BOTANY BAY. IN 1852 GIUSEPPE GARIBALDI, THE GREAT ITALIAN PATRIOT AND FIGHTER FOR THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY, IN COMMAND OF THE BRIG "CARMEN" WEIGHED ANCHOR OFF TASMANIA. HE LATER WROTE NOSTALGICALLY OF THE HAVEN OF PEACE AND BEAUTY HE FOUND THERE FAR FROM THE TURMOIL OF EUROPE.

THE FIRST ITALIAN EMIGRANTS TO AUSTRALIA WERE ATTRACTED BY THE GOLD DISCOVERIES OF THE 1850s. THROUGHOUT THE 1850s AND 1860s A STEADY STREAM OF ITALIANS ARRIVED IN SOUTH EASTERN AUSTRALIA, AND IN 1870 THE ITALIAN CONSUL IN MELBOURNE ESTIMATED THEIR NUMBER AT AROUND 1,000. MOST WERE NORTHERN ITALIANS FROM SONDRIO AND NEARBY PROVINCES OF LOMBARDY; SOME WERE FROM PIEDMONT AND GENOA; A VERY FEW WERE FROM SOUTHERN ITALY AND SICILY. MOST OF THE LOMBARDS WENT TO THE GOLD FIELDS AND SOME MADE THEIR FORTUNES IN WALHALLA AND HEPBURN. OTHERS LEFT THE DIGGINGS TO BECOME FARMERS. OTHERS MOSTLY FROM GENOA, NAPLES AND SICILY, WORKED AS SAILORS AND STEVEDORES IN THE COASTAL SHIPPING TRADE, OR AS FISHERMEN.

AMONG THE VERY EARLY ARRIVALS WERE THE CHALK-FIGURINE MAKERS FROM LUCCA AND THE VIGGIANESE STREET-MUSICIANS. THE HISTORIAN F. LANCASTER JONES HAS POINTED OUT THAT TODAY THERE ARE THREE GREAT CENTRES OF VIGGIANESE CULTURE - VIGGIANO, NEW YORK AND MELBOURNE. HE HAS WRITTEN: "INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH IT WAS PROBABLY THESE MUSICIANS WHO PLAYED A PROGRAM OF ITALIAN MUSIC AT THE INAUGURATION OF MELBOURNE'S DANTE ALIGHIERI SOCIETY IN AUGUST 1896, A SHORT SEVEN YEARS AFTER THE FOUNDATION OF THE PARENT SOCIETY IN ITALY. FOR MELBOURNE WAS THEN THE CULTURAL CENTRE OF AUSTRALIA, AND ITALY THE CULTURAL CENTRE OF THE WORLD."

BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY THERE WERE 6,000 ITALIANS IN AUSTRALIA. BETWEEN THE CENSUSES OF 1921 AND 1933 THE NUMBER OF ITALIAN-BORN IN AUSTRALIA INCREASED THREE-FOLD TO MORE THAN 20,000. SINCE 1945, AS A RESULT OF LARGE-SCALE ITALIAN IMMIGRATION, 165,000 ITALIANS HAVE BECOME AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS AND THERE ARE TODAY WELL OVER A QUARTER OF A MILLION ITALIAN-BORN PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA.

AUSTRALIAN CITIES ABOUND IN EVIDENCE OF ITALIAN WORK AND INFLUENCE. MUSIC WAS NURSED BY ITALIAN TEACHERS OF COMPOSITION, INSTRUMENTS AND BEL CANTO; PERFORMERS, SINGERS, MAESTRI, FOUNDERS OF SCHOOLS, AND OF CHAMBER AND SYMPHONIC ORCHESTRAS. ALBERTO ZELMAN FOUNDED THE VICTORIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA; PIETRO CECCHI TAUGHT DAME NELLIE MELBA; VITELLI FOUNDED ALAN'S HOUSE OF MUSIC; COUNT CARANDINI MADE A FAMOUS PRIMADONNA OF HIS TASMANIAN-BORN WIFE MARY BURGESS, A RELATIVE OF SHELLEY. CLAUDIO ALCORSO, TILL RECENT CHAIRMAN OF THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA COMPANY, AND NOW A MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION, WAS KNIGHTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC.

A LONG LINE OF ARTISTS EXTENDS FROM BRAMBILLA, A VERY EARLY SETTLER, TO ANTONIO DATTILO-RUBBO, WHO FOR MANY YEARS CONDUCTED ONE OF THE LEADING ART SCHOOLS IN SYDNEY AND WHO TAUGHT, INFLUENCED AND ENCOURAGED A GENERATION OF PAINTERS. MONTEFIERE WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES ACADEMY OF ART IN 1871. WELL-KNOWN CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS INCLUDE ERNESTO MURGO, A VICTORIAN SCULPTOR WITH HIS OWN ART GALLERY, WHO LECTURES IN SCULPTURE AT THE MELBOURNE TECHNICAL COLLEGE. FRANCO BELGIORNO-NETTIS, AN ENGINEER WHO CAME TO AUSTRALIA IN 1951, IS ALSO AN ARTIST AND SCULPTOR. THE TRANSFIELD ENGINEERING GROUP, OF WHICH HE IS ONE OF THE PRINCIPALS, IS NOTED NOT ONLY FOR HEAVY STEEL CONSTRUCTION BUT FOR ITS PATRONAGE OF THE ARTS. THE TRANSFIELD PRIZE HAS BEEN FOR MANY YEARS ONE OF THE BEST-ENDOWED ART AWARDS IN AUSTRALIA. IN 1973 TRANSFIELD SURPASSED ITS PREVIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS WITH THE ORGANISATION OF THE FIRST SYDNEY BIENNALE, HELD IN THE OPERA HOUSE.

CARLO CATANI CAME TO AUSTRALIA IN THE 1870s AND AS CHIEF ENGINEER FOR THE VICTORIAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CREATION OF THE ALEXANDRA GARDENS AND ST. KILDA ROAD. THE CATANI TOWER OF ST. KILDA AND LAKE CATANI, ON MOUNT BUFFALO, WERE NAMED AFTER HIM. ETTORE CHECCHI, A CONTEMPORARY OF CATANI'S AND ALSO AN ENGINEER FOR THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT, IS NOTED FOR HIS EXPLORATION OF THE UPPER MURRAY AS WELL AS FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PLANNING OF THE HUME RESERVOIR. THERE HAVE BEEN FAMOUS PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS LIKE FIASCHI; SCIENTISTS LIKE THE ASTRONOMER BARACCHI; GREAT FAMILIES SUCH AS THE CILENTOS. RAFFAELLE CARBONI, AN HISTORIAN AND EX-SCHO TEACHER, WENT DOWN IN HISTORY AS ONE OF THE MINERS' LEADERS AT THE EUREKA STOCKADE IN 1854.

MORE RECENTLY, IN ADDITION TO THE SKILLS OF ITALIAN IMMIGRANTS, WE HAVE HAD THE EXAMPLE OF TWO GREAT ITALIAN ENTERPRISES WHOSE ACTIVITIES HAVE BEEN A MODEL - AND IN MANY WAYS AN INSPIRATION - FOR THE POLICIES OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT. I REFER TO ENTE NAZIONALE IDROCARBURI (ENI) AND THE ISTITUTO PER LA RICOSTRUZIONE INDUSTRIALE (IRI). WITH THEIR WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN MIND WE HAVE SOUGHT TO EXTEND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND ESTABLISHED THE PETROLEUM AND MINERALS AUTHORITY.

ALL OF US KNOW WHAT ITALIAN MIGRANTS HAVE DONE FOR AUSTRALIA - THE BENEFITS AND SKILLS, THE VITALITY AND ENERGY THEY HAVE BROUGHT TO OUR WAY OF LIFE. ONLY RECENTLY, HOWEVER, HAVE AUSTRALIANS FULLY ACCEPTED THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES TO MIGRANTS AND RECOGNISED A DEEP AND CONTINUING OBLIGATION TO THEM. RECENTLY THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED THAT THERE SHOULD NO LONGER BE A SEPARATE DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION. FAR FROM DOWNGRADING THE VALUE WE PLACE ON MIGRANTS OR IMMIGRATION, THAT DECISION RECOGNISED THAT MIGRANTS MUST BE TREATED IN EVERY WAY AS FULL AND EQUAL CITIZENS. IT HAS BEEN TOO EASY IN THE PAST TO PUT MIGRANTS IN SEPARATE COMPARTMENTS, IN SPECIAL CATEGORIES, AND SHUFFLE OFF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEM TO THE STATES OR TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS. NOW AT LAST WE HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MIGRANT CITIZENS ARE AUSTRALIANS IN EVERY WAY, AND THEIR RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES, THEIR DUTIES, THEIR PROBLEMS AND THEIR NEEDS ARE NO DIFFERENT IN PRINCIPLE FROM THOSE OF ANYONE ELSE.

THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE HAVE ABANDONED OUR CONCERN FOR MIGRANTS. IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT WE NO LONGER FEEL A SPECIAL OBLIGATION TO THEM. NO GOVERNMENT HAS DONE MORE FOR THEIR HAPPINESS, THEIR SECURITY OR THEIR FUTURE THAN WE HAVE.

UNDER THE OLD ARRANGEMENTS IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A RELATIVELY SMALL DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION TO DEAL ADEQUATELY WITH SUCH DIVERSE MATTERS AS SETTLEMENT, WELFARE, EDUCATION, CITIZENSHIP AND POPULATION. THE DEPARTMENT SIMPLY DID NOT HAVE THE PHYSICAL OR FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO HANDLE THESE MATTERS. IT LACKED THE POWER TO PERFORM MANY OF THESE FUNCTIONS ADEQUATELY. SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS FOR MIGRANTS OR THE IN-SCHOOL EDUCATION OF MIGRANT CHILDREN WERE ESSENTIALLY FUNCTIONS OF OTHER DEPARTMENTS.

REMEMBER THAT BEFORE LABOR CAME TO POWER THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ADOPTED A VERY LIMITED ROLE IN SUCH AREAS AS EDUCATION AND URBAN AFFAIRS. IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL SECURITY, ITS MAIN TASK WAS TO GIVE OUT PENSIONS AND OTHER WELFARE BENEFITS. IN ALL THESE AREAS THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S ROLE HAS NOW CHANGED RADICALLY. IN EDUCATION WE ARE SEEKING TO ELIMINATE AREAS OF DISADVANTAGE, TO PROVIDE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN, NOT JUST TO HAND OUT ARBITRARY PER CAPITA PAYMENTS. IN SOCIAL SECURITY, THROUGH THE SOCIAL WELFARE COMMISSION AND THE AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE PLAN, WE ARE TRYING TO ESTABLISH COMMUNITY WELFARE FACILITIES FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS. IN SHORT WE HAVE BECOME AN INITIATOR, AN ACTIVIST IN THESE FIELDS IN A WAY THAT NO PREVIOUS AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAD ATTEMPTED.

IT IS ONLY LOGICAL THAT, IN LINE WITH THIS EXPANDED ROLE, MIGRANT AFFAIRS SHOULD COME WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF THE RELEVANT AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS. IF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS TO TACKLE GENUINELY THE PROBLEMS OF THE DISADVANTAGED IN OUR SCHOOLS IT CANNOT IGNORE MIGRANT EDUCATION. IF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND THE SOCIAL WELFARE COMMISSION ARE TO RESTRUCTURE OUR WELFARE SYSTEM EFFECTIVELY THEY CANNOT IGNORE THE WELFARE NEEDS OF MIGRANTS. THE SOONER WE SEE MIGRANT NEEDS AS PART OF THE OVERALL NEEDS OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY, THE SOONER THOSE NEEDS WILL BE MET BY THE BODIES WITH THE APPROPRIATE STAFF, FACILITIES, FINANCES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

THE GOVERNMENT'S EMPHASIS IS NOT ON MERE NUMBERS OF MIGRANTS BUT ON THE WELFARE OF MIGRANTS. WE BELIEVE MIGRANTS MUST HAVE THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES AS ALL OTHER AUSTRALIANS TO LEAD A FULL AND HAPPY LIFE AS FULL AND EQUAL CITIZENS. IN PARTICULAR WE BELIEVE THE EMPHASIS IN AN IMMIGRATION PROGRAM SHOULD BE ON THE REUNION OF FAMILIES.

THE MOST DRAMATIC RESULT OF OUR POLICIES HAS BEEN TO CHECK THE FLOW OF DISILLUSIONED AND DISAPPOINTED MIGRANTS LEAVING AUSTRALIA. BY PLACING FAMILY REUNION FOR MIGRANTS ABOVE MERE RECRUITING, WE HAVE STOPPED THE MIGRANT DRIFT. THE NUMBER OF MIGRANTS WHO BECAME AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS IN 1973 INCREASED BY 48 PER CENT OVER 1972, AND THE NUMBER RETURNING TO THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN DECLINED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN NINE YEARS.

THESE FIGURES ARE DEEPLY GRATIFYING TO THE GOVERNMENT. THEY SHOW THAT WE ARE MAKING MIGRANTS HAPPIER AND MORE CONTENTED CITIZENS, WITH WIDER OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE IN THE BENEFITS OF AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY. IN EFFECT, WE ARE SAYING IT IS NOT THE GOVERNMENT THAT SHOULD DECIDE WHO WILL COME TO AUSTRALIA AS MIGRANTS, BUT MIGRANTS THEMSELVES. A NEW CITIZEN WHO HAS SETTLED HAPPILY IN AUSTRALIA IS THE BEST PERSON TO RECOMMEND OTHERS TO JOIN HIM. WE ARE BRINGING FAMILIES TOGETHER, AND WE ARE BUILDING UP OUR MIGRANT POPULATION ON THE ONLY PROPER BASIS - A BASIS OF HUMANITY AND COMPASSION.

THE AIM OF OUR POLICIES IS TO PROMOTE THE SECURITY OF MIGRANTS AND REMOVE THE CAUSES OF NEEDLESS FEAR. FOR EVERY NEW CITIZEN IN A NEW LAND THERE ARE NATURAL SOURCES OF ANXIETY. THERE ARE LANGUAGE PROBLEMS, PROBLEMS OF LONELINESS, HOMESICKNESS AND ISOLATION. THERE ARE WORRIES ABOUT EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING. THERE ARE UNFAMILIAR LAWS. THERE IS, PERHAPS, A FEAR OF DEPORTATION. THERE IS A FEAR THAT HE MAY NEVER BE ABLE TO RETURN TO THE LAND OF HIS BIRTH OR REJOIN HIS LOVED ONES IN OLD AGE. THERE IS A FEAR THAT, IF HE DOES LEAVE AUSTRALIA, HE WILL BE PENALISED FOR DOING SO THROUGH THE LOSS OF SOCIAL SERVICE ENTITLEMENT



THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS WORKED VIGOROUSLY TO REMOVE THESE CAUSES OF FEAR. WE HAVE MADE GREAT PROGRESS. ONE OF OUR GREAT REFORMS HAS BEEN TO INTRODUCE THE PRINCIPLE OF PORTABLE PENSION RIGHTS. UNDER LEGISLATION PASSED BY THE LABOR GOVERNMENT, PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA RECEIVING AGE AND INVALID PENSIONS, INCLUDING WIVES' OR WIDOWS' PENSIONS, ARE ABLE TO RECEIVE THOSE IN ANY COUNTRY WHERE THEY CHOOSE TO LIVE. THE NEW LEGISLATION IS BENEFITING AGED, INVALID AND WIDOWED MIGRANTS WHO WISH TO RETURN TO THEIR FORMER HOMELANDS. IT APPLIES EQUALLY TO ALL RECIPIENTS OF PENSIONS, INCLUDING THOSE BORN IN AUSTRALIA, WHO WISH TO LIVE ABROAD.

IN MY POLICY SPEECH FOR THE LAST ELECTION I PROMISED ANOTHER VERY IMPORTANT REFORM FOR MIGRANTS. THE PRESENT INCOME TAX LAW ALLOWS CONCESSIONAL DEDUCTIONS FOR DEPENDANTS TO AUSTRALIAN RESIDENT TAXPAYERS ONLY WHERE THE DEPENDANTS ARE THEMSELVES RESIDENT IN AUSTRALIA. IN THE CASE OF A MIGRANT WHO COMES TO AUSTRALIA INTENDING TO BRING HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN OUT TO THIS COUNTRY AS SOON AS HE HAS MADE A HOME FOR THEM, A PERIOD OF FIVE YEARS IS REGARDED AS A REASONABLE TIME FOR THE WIFE AND CHILDREN TO JOIN THE MIGRANT IN AUSTRALIA. IF HE MAINTAINS THE FAMILY DURING THIS PERIOD INCOME TAX DEDUCTIONS FOR THE DEPENDANTS ARE ALLOWABLE TO HIM.

HOWEVER, MIGRANTS WHO ARE MAINTAINING DEPENDENT RELATIVES OVERSEAS WITH NO VIEW TO BRINGING THEM TO AUSTRALIA, OR WHO MAY BE PREVENTED FROM BRINGING THEM TO AUSTRALIA BY RESTRICTIVE EMIGRATION POLICIES IN FORCE IN SOME COUNTRIES, ARE UNABLE TO QUALIFY FOR A TAX DEDUCTION FOR DEPENDANTS. THE GOVERNMENT WILL EXTEND THE PROVISIONS OF THE INCOME TAX LAWS GOVERNING DEPENDANTS' DEDUCTIONS TO ENTITLE PEOPLE IN THESE SITUATIONS TO THE TAXATION ADVANTAGES AVAILABLE ALREADY TO ALL OF US MAINTAINING DEPENDENT RELATIVES WHO RESIDE IN AUSTRALIA.

LABOR'S CONCERN FOR MIGRANTS IS A CONTINUING CONCERN. IT FLOWS FROM OUR WHOLE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY. IT IS NOT SOMETHING DISCOVERED ONLY AT ELECTION TIME.

WE HAVE STANDARDISED THE REQUIREMENTS FOR CITIZENSHIP SO THAT EVERY MIGRANT SEEKING AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP CAN DO SO IRRESPECTIVE OF NATIONAL ORIGINS AND UNDER CONDITIONS APPLYING EQUALLY TO ALL. THE PERIOD OF RESIDENCE IS NOW THREE YEARS FOR EVERYONE.

WE HAVE AMENDED THE CRIMES ACT SO THAT IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE FOR AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS - INCLUDING, OF COURSE, NATURALIZED MIGRANTS - TO BE DEPORTED. TASK FORCES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN ALL STATE CAPITALS TO IDENTIFY THE MOST URGENT SETTLEMENT PROBLEMS CONFRONTING MIGRANTS. EACH IS CHAIRED BY A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND INCLUDES PEOPLE IN DAY-TO-DAY CONTACT WITH MIGRANTS AND THEIR NEEDS.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS SET UP A COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE OF THE IMMIGRATION ADVISORY COUNCIL TO INQUIRE INTO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MIGRANTS, EXPLOITATION OF MIGRANTS AND THEIR USE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES.

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST TELEPHONE SERVICE IN 20 LANGUAGES HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE CAPITAL CITIES TO ANSWER EMERGENCY PLEAS FOR HELP FROM MIGRANTS.

MIGRANT EDUCATION CENTRES HAVE BEEN OPENED IN PERTH, BRISBANE, MELBOURNE, SYDNEY AND ADELAIDE.

BY MEANS OF THE AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE PLAN, THE GOVERNMENT IS SEEKING TO INVOLVE LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN PLANNING THEIR WELFARE SERVICES. THE PLAN HAS SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR ITALIAN MIGRANTS BECAUSE IT PROVIDES THEM WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE WITH OTHER AUSTRALIANS IN ESTABLISHING WELFARE PRIORITIES AND LOCAL COMMUNITY NEEDS. TO HELP EXPLAIN THE PLAN TO MIGRANTS, THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY IS PREPARING AN EXPLANATORY LEAFLET FOR ITALIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER MIGRANT GROUPS.

HERE IS ONE SMALL BENEFIT THAT I KNOW WILL PLEASE MANY OF YOU. YESTERDAY THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL ANNOUNCED THAT, FROM TOMORROW, THE MINIMUM CHARGE FOR A 3-MINUTE TELEPHONE CALL FROM AUSTRALIA TO ITALY WILL BE REDUCED FROM \$10-30 TO \$7-00.

I BELIEVE AUSTRALIA'S PRESENT IMMIGRATION POLICIES ARE A RETURN TO THE HUMANITARIAN IDEALS THAT INSPIRED THE MIGRATION PROGRAM NEARLY 30 YEARS AGO. WE ARE DETERMINED THAT MEN AND WOMEN FROM OTHER NATIONS WHO HAVE SHOWN THEIR FAITH IN AUSTRALIA WILL HAVE THAT FAITH REWARDED AND RESTORED. MIGRANTS WILL BENEFIT AS MUCH AS OTHER AUSTRALIANS. I REMIND YOU THAT MIGRANTS WILL BENEFIT LIKE EVERYONE ELSE FROM THE GOVERNMENT'S REFORMS IN HEALTH, HOUSING, THE ENVIRONMENT, THE CITIES AND EDUCATION - ESPECIALLY EDUCATION. IT WILL NO LONGER BE NECESSARY FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO RESIGN IN PROTEST BECAUSE OF THE POOR CONDITIONS FOR MIGRANT EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS.

I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION MIGRANTS - AND ESPECIALLY ITALIANS - HAVE MADE TO AUSTRALIA'S PROGRESS. I LOOK TO THEM TO HELP US BUILD A GREATER AUSTRALIA FOR ALL OUR PEOPLE - A MORE HUMANE, TOLERANT, JUST AND BOUNTIFUL SOCIETY. WE ARE DETERMINED THAT MIGRANTS WILL SHARE FULLY IN THE PRESENT PROSPERITY AND FUTURE PROMISE OF THE NATION THEY HAVE DONE SO MUCH TO DEVELOP AND ENRICH.

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