

NOTES FOR THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON. E.G. WHITLAM, Q.C., M.P.,  
FOR A SPEECH AT ST PAUL'S HALL, IPSWICH, 18 NOVEMBER 1974

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1. I am proud to share this platform tonight with Rex Connor, the Minister for Minerals and Energy. The people of this city and this State have no greater friend and benefactor. Labor's policies for the development of our coal, minerals and other resources are in the best of hands. Rex Connor's handling of our mineral resources has safeguarded Australian ownership and vastly increased the returns to Australian producers from the sale of our exports. His achievements will ensure. They will be gratefully acknowledged by millions of Australians today and in generations to come.

2. Queenslanders in particular should examine the fruits of Labor's policies on minerals and energy. The future of Queensland's coal industry has never looked brighter. Exports are at a record level, both in volume and price. The Labor Government by careful planning and diligent negotiation has secured fair returns on our mineral exports for the benefit of all Australians. We have carefully supervised contract tender prices. Between January last year and September this year increases negotiated in the export prices of Queensland coal total \$1836 million over the full terms of all coal export contracts. The value of the increases actually received during this period is approximately \$100 million.

3. The facts can no longer be suppressed by the Queensland Government they are crucial to Queensland's future development and prosperity. The export controls imposed on black coal exports from Queensland and New South Wales to Japan, Europe and elsewhere have been outstandingly successful. Coal exporting companies are no longer fighting each other and cutting prices. Above all we have put an end to interstate competition which was resulting in lower returns to Australia as a whole. It is one thing for Australia to compete with other countries for markets. It is absurd for one Australian state to compete with another.

4. Japanese coal buyers now accept the value of dealing with the Australian coal industry under the new export controls system. They know there is a certainty of supply at a fair price and that the guarantee of the Australian Government stands behind Queensland coal producers. As a result of Rex Connor's negotiations the Japanese have made known their requirements of coking coal and steaming coal up to the year 1980. This information will enable the Australian Government to plan in conjunction with Queensland coal producers and other members of the Australian Coal Association for the further development of existing mines, increases in their labour force improvement in rail transport and harbour coal loading and other shipping facilities. The visit of Prime Minister Tanaka to Australia confirmed these arrangements. Australian-Japanese trading relations are at their highest level of trust, cordiality and mutual benefit.

5. Contrast the benefits that Labor has brought to Queensland with the benefits Mr Bjelke-Petersen has refused. By refusing to co-operate in our plans for a growth centre at Townsville, by refusing to co-operate in our plans for land acquisition to bring down the price of land, Mr Bjelke-Petersen has thrown away \$50 million in Australian Government assistance to Queensland. Labor's policies are not only bringing in hundreds of millions of extra dollars in export earnings. At the same time we are giving money to the States on an unprecedented scale. Queensland has received more from my Government than it received from any previous Government in history.

Yet Mr Bjelke-Petersen constantly whinges about the harsh treatment meted out to him by the Labor Government. Last financial year our total payments to Queensland totalled \$739 million. Queensland received more than \$382 per head of population in 1973-74 compared with \$343 per head in average payments to all States.

6. Last year our grants for primary and secondary education were up 145 per cent on the year before. Tertiary education was up 165 per cent, technical education 110 per cent, welfare housing 20 per cent, Aboriginal advancement nearly 30 per cent. Health and welfare, roads and urban and regional development in Queensland are all getting record amounts from my Government. We are doing more for local government than any previous government in Canberra. This year I approved grants totalling \$56 million to local government councils throughout Australia. Queensland's share of these grants is \$8.9 million. The Ipswich City Council is receiving \$364,000 - the largest grant for any local council in Queensland outside Brisbane itself.

7. One area of particular social relevance to Ipswich is the Australian Government's decision to establish a community health centre in Ipswich. In the last financial year we provided a total grant of \$78,719 to get the project off the ground. In the current financial year 1974-75 the total grant is to be \$297,802 - \$258,577 for operating costs and a capital grant of \$39,225.

That's what you get when you are fortunate enough to have socially committed men like Bill Hayden and Doug Everingham acting in your best interests in the vital fields of health and welfare. You wouldn't get it from Mr Tooth. You didn't get it from Mr Tooth.

8. I know the great hardship suffered by your district from the flood disaster earlier this year. All Australia sympathised with you in that terrible experience. My Government gave prompt and generous assistance for flood relief. We immediately mobilised Civil Defence and Defence personnel and resources. Our payments to Queensland, totalling \$66 million so far, are the biggest natural disaster outlay ever made by an Australian Government. Queensland's expenditure on flood relief from its own resources has amounted to \$3.7 million. We created a natural disasters organisation to absorb the existing Civil Defence arrangements and deal with the long-term relief of flood and bushfire devastation.

9. We must heed the lessons of the Queensland flood disaster. Brisbane is a clear example of a city with inadequate land use, planning and control, especially with respect to flood plains. Since 1887 floods have occurred eight times in the lower catchment areas, and as the city and vulnerable surrounding districts grow, the risk increases. Despite the devastation in the past, Queensland governments did little to prevent or prepare for new emergencies. We can be sure that flooding rains will occur again. We must act now to modify their effects. In April I invited the Premier to submit a state-wide plan for flood mitigation measures to be considered for Australian Government assistance. The Premier supplied such a plan. We have undertaken to consider requests for assistance for any Queensland flood mitigation project as soon as we receive full information on the proposed work. We have been prevented from acting on requests for assistance because the Queensland Government has not provided the information we need.

In July we asked the Queensland Premier to supply more detailed information on the projects he had submitted. We hoped to have a response by October. We are still waiting.

We have received no detailed proposal at all about the Bremmer River which is of most vital concern to the people of Ipswich.

Although the Australian Government allocated \$66 million for flood relief and restoration in Queensland it looks as though only about \$57 million will be spent.

10. My Government adheres to its goal of full employment. We are taking action on many fronts to safeguard workers' jobs. The increase in unemployment in Ipswich in recent months, particularly in the textile industry, has given us great concern. Of 192 people in Ipswich out of work in the clothing and textile industry, 160 are receiving structural adjustment assistance and a further 21 applications are being processed. We have acted to curb imports of certain finished knitted and woven goods from South East Asia. On 11 September a further reference was sent to the textile authority covering yarns, knitted fabrics and towelling. The Government has received this report and is considering its recommendations. On 26 August the Industries Assistance Commission began public hearings to determine what wider assistance is required for the clothing industry.

11. Only last Friday I sent a reference to the Textiles Authority within the Industries Assistance Commission covering a wide range of men's, women's, children's, and infant's clothing, as well as hosiery and gloves.

This action is being taken as a result of high and rising levels of imports and apparent total availability of such goods on the Australian market substantially in excess of previous levels.

The reference seeks the advice of the Textiles Authority on whether action should be taken to restrain imports either under the GATT textile arrangement or, if necessary to advise on any other measures considered desirable.

I have asked the Textiles Authority to report within 45 days in relation to certain shirts and pyjamas, and within 75 days in respect of the remainder.

I take the opportunity now to invite manufacturers and any other interested parties to start preparing submissions to the Textile Authority without delay. The Authority will arrange to hold public hearings and details of these will shortly be announced.

12. We have taken many other measures to relieve unemployment. They are not just short-term palliative measures but far-sighted schemes to bring help to deprived regions and make our industries more efficient and resilient. On 23 September we announced a special scheme of grants to towns outside the main metropolitan areas, including subsidies to companies and grants to companies or local bodies for the establishment of viable alternative production and employment. Ipswich City Council has received \$808,000 since the introduction in September of the Regional Employment Development Scheme. This will provide new roadside retaining walls, concrete channelling and footpaths. We have approved 34 local projects to provide employment in Queensland under our REDS scheme.

Another 15 have been given provisional approval pending further discussions with local government bodies. Besides providing employment, these schemes will bring permanent benefits to Queensland cities, towns and tourist resorts. In October we introduced the National Employment and Training System to develop and rationalise our manpower resources. Since the introduction of NEAT, 704 people in Queensland have undergone training and retraining in new jobs. A further 1600 Queensland applicants are waiting to join the scheme.

13. Never once have we relaxed our efforts to solve our economic problems - problems we share with every comparable country. Prices in Queensland are rising faster than in any other State but Mr Bjelke-Petersen does nothing about it. He campaigned against our referendum seeking powers to deal with prices and refuses to use the powers that the States alone possess. He refuses to co-operate with us in reducing high electricity costs in Queensland. He refuses to let ANL ships operate between Queensland ports, thus keeping up the high cost of freights. He refuses to discuss our offer to take over the State Railways and relieve Queensland of this constant and growing burden on its budget - thus keeping up the cost of railway freights and fares.

14. Contrast this negative and unco-operative attitude with the major economic decisions and initiatives I announced last Tuesday. In my statement to Parliament I said:

'These measures add up to a very substantial relaxation of monetary policy. Financial conditions can be expected to become a good deal easier in the months ahead than they have been in the recent past. In the past week the Governor of the Reserve Bank has written to the banks requesting them to increase appreciably their rate of new lending and I would expect to see a prompt response by the banks some savings banks are already stepping up the rate of their housing loan approvals.'

15. We are increasing the real purchasing value of take-home pay by cutting income tax. These tax cuts are part of our plan for the reintroduction of cost of living adjustments for wage and salary earners. Wage indexation will ensure that the real wages of employees are protected in the years ahead. In the transition period the value of wages will be preserved by the tax cuts.

16. In Queensland the only people whose wages have been subject to indexation so far are Members of Parliament. I ask Queenslanders to contrast our support of cost of living adjustments for all wage and salary earners with the outright opposition of the Liberal-Country Party to the applications for wage indexation now before the Arbitration Commission. This contrast between the Labor Party and the Liberal-Country parties will be clear for all to see when the Australian Government representative speaks in support of cost of living adjustments before the Arbitration Commission and the Queensland Government representative opposes them.

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