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OPENING REMARKS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON. E.G. WHITLAM,
Q.C., M.P., FOR CHANNEL 7, MELBOURNE, SECOND ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM

(RECORDED 2 DECEMBER 1974 FOR REPLAY 9.30 P.M. ON 2 DECEMBER 1974
IN MELBOURNE, SYDNEY, BRISBANE, ADELAIDE)

I AM HAPPY TO TELL YOU SOMETHING OF WHAT THE LABOR GOVERNMENT HAS ACHIEVED SINCE WE CAME TO OFFICE JUST TWO YEARS AGO TODAY. WE'VE HAD GREAT PROBLEMS, AS YOU KNOW - EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WESTERN WORLD HAS SHARED THOSE PROBLEMS - BUT A GREAT RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT STANDS BEHIND US. AND DESPITE OUR DIFFICULTIES, DESPITE THESE WORLD-WIDE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, OUR HOPES ARE STILL HIGH. WE HAVE IMPORTANT PLANS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD.

AS YOU KNOW, WE ARE CONTENDING WITH THE TWIN PROBLEMS OF INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT. NO WESTERN COUNTRY HAS ESCAPED THESE PROBLEMS - NOT ONE. FOR THE FIRST TIME WE ARE FIGHTING BOTH PROBLEMS AT ONCE. WE ARE CARRYING ON THE FIGHT WITH EVERY AVAILABLE WEAPON, EVERY MEASURE AT OUR DISPOSAL, EVERY CONSTITUTIONAL POWER WE POSSESS. WE'VE HAD VERY LITTLE HELP OR CO-OPERATION FROM OUR OPPONENTS IN THE SENATE OR ELSEWHERE. BUT I ASK YOU TO REMEMBER THIS: AUSTRALIANS ARE EVERYWHERE BETTER OFF THAN THEY WERE BEFORE LABOR CAME IN. AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS, ALLOWING FOR INFLATION, HAVE INCREASED IN REAL PURCHASING POWER BY 3.2 PER CENT IN THE YEAR TO JUNE 1973 AND BY A FURTHER 3.9 PER CENT IN THE YEAR TO JUNE 1974.

THAT'S A GAIN OF MORE THAN SEVEN PER CENT IN REAL LIVING STANDARDS UNDER A LABOR GOVERNMENT. THE LIBERALS DID NOTHING TO SAFEGUARD EMPLOYEES - THE GREAT BULK OF THE PEOPLE - FROM THE EFFECTS OF INFLATION AND WE HAVE - AND WE'LL DO MORE. THE LIBERALS DID NOTHING TO PROTECT PEOPLE FROM THE EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT. WE HAVE - AND WILL WE DO MORE. OUR RETRAINING SCHEME IS JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF WHAT AN ACTIVE, COMPASSIONATE GOVERNMENT CAN DO. AND REMEMBER THIS ABOUT UNEMPLOYMENT: OUR PREDECESSORS, THE LIBERALS, CREATED UNEMPLOYMENT AS A DELIBERATE ACT OF POLICY. WE HAVE NEVER CREATED IT DELIBERATELY, IT HAS COME ABOUT BECAUSE WE HAVE HAD TO TAKE ACTION TO DEAL WITH THE WORLD-WIDE INFLATIONARY CRISIS. AND WE ARE DETERMINED TO REDRESS THE HARDSHIP JUST AS SOON AS WE CAN. THROUGHOUT THE YEAR WE HAVE TAKEN A WIDE RANGE OF ECONOMIC DECISIONS. WE NO LONGER REGARD THE BUDGET AS OUR SOLE INSTRUMENT OF ECONOMIC POLICY. WE HAVE BEEN MUCH MORE RESOURCEFUL, MUCH MORE FLEXIBLE IN OUR APPROACH. ONLY THREE WEEKS AGO I ANNOUNCED A NEW SERIES OF MEASURES TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY AND REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT. WE HAVE MADE CUTS IN TAXATION WHICH, TOGETHER WITH THOSE IN THE BUDGET, WILL BE WORTH \$1200 MILLION. AND THOSE TAX CUTS ARE BASED ON A NEW TAX SCALE DESIGNED TO BENEFIT THE FAMILIES MOST IN NEED, THE PEOPLE MOST NEGLECTED IN THE PAST.

AT THE SAME TIME WE HAVE PRESSED AHEAD WITH OUR GREAT PROGRAM OF SOCIAL REFORM AND INNOVATION. OUR OPPONENTS HAVE DONE THEIR BEST TO OBSTRUCT THAT PROGRAM BECAUSE THEY HAVE NO WORTHWHILE PROGRAM OF THEIR OWN. YOU'LL REMEMBER THAT LAST APRIL THEY TOOK THE EXTREME STEP OF BLOCKING SUPPLY IN THE SENATE - CUTTING OFF OUR MONEY. SO WE WENT TO THE PEOPLE: AND THE PEOPLE ENDORSED OUR PROGRAM FOR THE SECOND TIME. YOU RETURNED US TO OFFICE. YOU PUT US BACK ON THE JOB.

ALREADY WE HAVE PUT MANY HISTORIC MEASURES THROUGH PARLIAMENT. WE HAVE EXTENDED THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM WE LAUNCHED LAST YEAR INTO THE NEW AREA OF TECHNICAL EDUCATION. WE WILL BE SPENDING \$100 MILLION ON TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS.

WE HAVE SET UP OUR PETROLEUM AND MINERALS AUTHORITY TO HELP KEEP THE OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF OUR VAST NATURAL RESOURCES IN AUSTRALIAN HANDS.

WE HAVE OPENED THE WAY FOR ORDINARY AUSTRALIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE A.I.D.C. AND THE NATIONAL INVESTMENT FUND.

WE HAVE GIVEN PENSIONERS THE BIGGEST INCREASE ON RECORD.

WE'VE GOT OUR CHILD CARE PROGRAM UNDERWAY.

WE'VE GOT OUR HEALTH INSURANCE LEGISLATION THROUGH AN HISTORIC JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT.

WE'VE TACKLED THE VEXED AND DIFFICULT QUESTION OF WAGE INDEXATION TO PROTECT WORKERS AGAINST INFLATION.

WE'VE BROUGHT IN HISTORIC LEGISLATION AGAINST RESTRICTIVE TRADE PRACTICES TO BAN PRICE FIXING AND PROTECT CONSUMERS.

WE'VE INTRODUCED OUR NATIONAL COMPENSATION SCHEME TO SAFEGUARD EVERY WORKING MAN AND WOMAN AGAINST INJURY OR SICKNESS, HOWEVER CAUSED.

WE'VE WON NEW MARKETS FOR OUR GOODS OVERSEAS AND VASTLY INCREASED THE RETURNS FROM THE SALE OF OUR COAL AND IRON ORE.

THIS YEAR SAW THE OPENING OF THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE HERE IN VICTORIA. IT IS ONE OF 356 NEW HEALTH CENTRES AND OTHER PROJECTS APPROVED UNDER LABOR'S COMMUNITY HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS.

WE ARE THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO RECOGNISE THE NEEDS OF LOCAL COUNCILS. WE APPROVED GRANTS THIS YEAR OF \$56 MILLION TO HELP COUNCILS THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA IMPROVE THEIR SERVICES AND AMENITIES.

WE HAVE LAUNCHED OUR PLANS FOR A VAST NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM AND HAVE SET ASIDE \$1200 MILLION FOR THIS PURPOSE OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS.

THESE ARE A FEW OF THE MAJOR INITIATIVES WE HAVE TAKEN THIS YEAR IN FULFILMENT OF OUR PROGRAM - A PROGRAM TWICE APPROVED BY THE PEOPLE. I AM PROUD OF ALL WE HAVE DONE. OUR OVERRIDING PURPOSE IS TO WIDEN THE OPPORTUNITIES AND RAISE THE LIVING STANDARDS OF EVERY AUSTRALIAN. IN 1974 WE HAVE COME A LONG WAY TOWARDS ACHIEVING OUR GOALS. IT HAS NOT BEEN EASY FOR US. IT HAS NOT BEEN EASY FOR YOU. I HAVE TO TELL YOU FRANKLY THAT 1975 WILL BE ANOTHER DIFFICULT YEAR ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT. I HAVE MADE NO SCRET OF THAT. THE FIGURES WON'T LOOK GOOD FOR A WHILE, BUT I AM CONFIDENT THERE WILL BE AN IMPROVEMENT LATER IN THE YEAR AS OUR MEASURES TAKE EFFECT. ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND THE SOLID, SECURE THINGS THAT MATTER IN THE LONG RUN - OUR GREAT NATURAL RESOURCES, OUR BUOYANT OVERSEAS TRADE, OUR BASICALLY STRONG ECONOMY, OUR EDUCATED LITERATE, RESOURCEFUL PEOPLE. WITH THOSE THINGS BEHIND US WE CAN GET OVER OUR DIFFICULTIES AND GET ON WITH THE JOB OF MAKING THIS COUNTRY MORE PROSPEROUS, MORE JUST, MORE ENLIGHTENED, MORE EFFICIENT. I LOOK TO ALL AUSTRALIANS, TO ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY - AND ESPECIALLY TO LABOR'S TRADITIONAL SUPPORTERS - FOR CO-OPERATION IN CARRYING FORWARD OUR GREAT TASK IN THE YEARS TO COME.
