

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER
5 DECEMBER 1974

A YEAR AGO I REPORTED TO THE PARLIAMENT ON THE GOVERNMENT'S FIRST YEAR IN OFFICE. IT WAS A YEAR OF FAR-REACHING REFORM, OF UNPRECEDENTED ACHIEVEMENT, OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY SURPASSING ALL RECORDS. I ENDED MY SPEECH WITH THESE WORDS: "I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE, WHEN NEXT THEY ARE ASKED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE ALTERNATIVES BEFORE THEM, WILL ENDORSE OUR RECORD AND RENEW OUR MANDATE."

THE PEOPLE DID SO. IN APRIL THIS YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL PARLIAMENT, THE OPPOSITION IN THE SENATE REFUSED SUPPLY TO THE ELECTED GOVERNMENT. THEY FORCED AN ELECTION BY VIOLATING AN ESTABLISHED ACCEPTED CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLE. SENATORS ELECTED 3½ YEARS AND 6½ YEARS BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, SENATORS WHO HAD ALREADY BLOCKED ESSENTIAL PARTS OF OUR LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM, FORCED US TO THE POLLS HALFWAY THROUGH OUR TERM.

WE ACCEPTED THEIR CHALLENGE. WE WENT TO THE PEOPLE AND THE PEOPLE RETURNED US TO OFFICE. ON 18 MAY, AUSTRALIANS CONFIRMED THEIR DECISION OF 2 DECEMBER 1972.

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THEY ENDORSED OUR PROGRAM. THEY STRENGTHENED OUR POSITION IN THE SENATE. THEY ANNIHILATED THE D.L.P. SENATORS WHO COLLABORATED IN THIS ABUSE OF DEMOCRACY. THEY CONFIRMED LABOR'S VOTE IN THE CITIES WHERE THE GOVERNMENT SECURED ITS MANDATE 17 MONTHS BEFORE. THEY GAVE US CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS TO CARRY ON WITH THE JOB - THE JOB THEY HAD ELECTED US TO DO.

WE ACCEPTED THOSE INSTRUCTIONS AND IMMEDIATELY SET ABOUT TO DISCHARGE THEM. WE HAVE WORKED UNREMITTINGLY TO FULFIL OUR UNDERTAKINGS TO THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE. IT HAS NOT BEEN EASY. WE HAVE CONTENDED WITH THE SAME OBSTRUCTION WE FACED LAST YEAR. YET OUR RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT IN 1974 IS AS SOLID AND IMPRESSIVE AS IT WAS LAST YEAR.

OUR LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM IN 1974 WAS CARRIED THROUGH ON THE SAME MASSIVE SCALE AS LAST YEAR. WHEN THE 28TH PARLIAMENT ADJOURNED FOR CHRISTMAS LAST YEAR, 254 BILLS HAD BEEN INTRODUCED. A FURTHER 42 WERE INTRODUCED BEFORE THE PARLIAMENT WAS DISSOLVED IN APRIL. DURING THE 29TH PARLIAMENT, A TOTAL OF 187 BILLS HAS BEEN INTRODUCED SO FAR. THE PARLIAMENT HAS THEREFORE DEALT WITH 229 BILLS IN 1974 - A FIGURE THAT EXCEEDS ALL RECORDS FOR A SINGLE YEAR WITH THE EXCEPTION OF 1973. WE HAVE SAT FOR A TOTAL OF HOURS IN 1974 - COMPARED WITH 908 HOURS IN 1973. THE FIGURES FOR EITHER YEAR REPRESENT THE GREATEST NUMBER OF SITTING HOURS IN ^A~~THE~~ YEAR FOR MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY.

WE HAVE CONSOLIDATED AND EXPANDED THE GREAT REFORMS WE BEGAN IN 1973. THROUGHOUT THE YEAR WE HAVE CONTENDED WITH ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ON A SCALE UNKNOWN FOR MORE THAN 40 YEARS. SUCH PROBLEMS WOULD BE DAUNTING FOR ANY GOVERNMENT; FOR A LABOR GOVERNMENT, COMMITTED TO REFORM AND INNOVATION ON THE WIDEST FRONT, THEY HAVE BEEN DOUBLY BITTER AND FRUSTRATING. YET WE HAVE NEVER RELAXED OUR EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT. EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WESTERN WORLD HAS FACED THESE PROBLEMS. NO COUNTRY IN THE WESTERN WORLD HAS SOLVED THEM. OUR RECORD STANDS UP WELL BESIDE THAT OF ANY OTHER COMPARABLE NATION.

DESPITE THESE PROBLEMS, AUSTRALIANS TODAY ARE EVERYWHERE BETTER OFF THAN THEY WERE WHEN LABOR CAME IN. AVERAGE EARNINGS HAVE INCREASED IN REAL PURCHASING POWER BY MORE THAN SEVEN PER CENT UNDER A LABOR GOVERNMENT. OUR MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN AND INVIGORATE THE ECONOMY ARE CONTINUING. WE NO LONGER REGARD THE BUDGET AS THE SOLE INSTRUMENT OF ECONOMIC POLICY. THIS YEAR, FACED WITH UNPRECEDENTED AND COMPLEX PROBLEMS OF ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT, WE HAVE SHOWN OURSELVES READY TO ACT WHENEVER NECESSARY. THREE WEEKS AGO WE ANNOUNCED CUTS IN TAXATION WORTH \$1200 MILLION IN A FULL YEAR. WE HAVE EASED CREDIT AND BOOSTED THE MONEY SUPPLY TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT. EVERY FINANCIAL WEAPON, EVERY CONSTITUTIONAL POWER AT OUR DISPOSAL HAS BEEN USED IN OUR FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT. WHENEVER IT HAS BEEN NECESSARY TO TAKE ACTION WHICH MAY HARM INDIVIDUALS OR COMPANIES, WE HAVE DONE OUR BEST TO SHIELD THOSE AFFECTED AND CUSHION THE EFFECTS OF OUR DECISIONS.

ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, HOWEVER, HAVE NOT BEEN OUR ONLY DISTRACTION. THE WORK OF THE PARLIAMENT HAS BEEN MADE INFINITELY MORE ARDUOUS AND PROTRACTED BY THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE SENATE. THE DEFERMENT OR REJECTION OF A BILL DOES NOT AFFECT THAT BILL ALONE; IT DELAYS AND COMPLICATES THE GOVERNMENT'S WHOLE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM. IT FORCES THE PARLIAMENT TO DEAL WITH MEASURES OVER AND OVER AGAIN. OUR FOUR REFERENDUM BILLS WERE REJECTED TWICE BY THE SENATE DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEIR REJECTION COULD NOT PREVENT THE REFERENDUMS BEING HELD, AND OPPOSITION SENATORS KNEW THIS. THEY PREFERRED TO DELAY THE BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE. THE DOUBLE DISSOLUTION WAS AN UNNECESSARY AND INTOLERABLE INTERRUPTION, NOT ONLY FOR WHAT IT SIGNIFIED, BUT FOR THE DELAY IT CAUSED TO THE GOVERNMENT'S WORK. TWENTY-TWO BILLS INTRODUCED DURING THE PREVIOUS PARLIAMENT LAPSED WHEN THE PARLIAMENT WAS DISSOLVED AND HAD TO BE REINTRODUCED AND DEBATED AGAIN. DURING THE 29TH PARLIAMENT WHICH MET IN JULY, THE SENATE HAS REJECTED 12 BILLS, DEFERRED ANOTHER 4 AND AMENDED 8 - NOT INCLUDING THOSE PASSED BY THE JOINT SITTING.

IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE FACT THAT WE WERE ABLE TO KEEP THE NUMBER OF SEPARATE BILLS TO A MINIMUM BY COMBINING RELATED MATTERS IN SINGLE BILLS, THE DELAY AND INTERFERENCE WITH THE PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH GREATER.

WITH OUR MANDATE RENEWED IN MAY WE WERE READY TO RESUME THE TASK OF GOVERNMENT WITH EVEN GREATER VIGOR AND DETERMINATION. IF JUSTICE AND SANITY PREVAILED IN THESE MATTERS, WE WOULD HAVE EXPECTED A FAIR GO AT LAST FOR OUR LEGISLATION. WE GOT NO SUCH THING. THE OPPOSITION LEARNT NOTHING FROM THEIR DEFEAT. FOR THE THIRD TIME THEY REJECTED THE SIX BILLS ON WHICH THE DOUBLE DISSOLUTION WAS GRANTED. HONOURABLE MEMBERS WILL RECALL THE SUBSTANCE OF THOSE BILLS. THEY WERE THOSE IMPLEMENTING OUR UNIVERSAL HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME, OUR PROPOSAL FOR ONE VOTE ONE VALUE, OUR PETROLEUM AND MINERALS AUTHORITY. THEY FORMED THE BASIS OF THE DOUBLE DISSOLUTION IN APRIL AND THE ELECTION WHICH FOLLOWED. THE PEOPLE ENDORSED THESE MEASURES AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSED THEM FOR THE THIRD TIME. YET THE SENATE REJECTED THEM AGAIN, KNOWING THAT THE JOINT SITTING WOULD EVENTUALLY, INEVITABLY, PASS THEM. IT WAS A NEEDLESS AND PETTY DELAY.

THE SENATE'S CAMPAIGN OF WANTON OBSTRUCTION DID NOT END THERE. WITH THE PASSAGE OF OUR HEALTH LEGISLATION OPPOSITION SENATORS PROCEEDED TO REJECT THE ANCILLARY BILLS NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT IT. THEY HAVE REJECTED OUR LEGISLATION, THREE TIMES PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, TO ESTABLISH THE AUTHORITY OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT OVER AUSTRALIA'S OFF-SHORE RESOURCES. THEY HAVE CONTINUED TO OBSTRUCT OUR PROPOSALS TO EXPAND THE AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND ENABLE IT TO ASSIST AUSTRALIAN COMPANIES AND PROTECT AUSTRALIAN OWNERSHIP OF OUR INDUSTRIES.

FOR THE THIRD TIME THEY HAVE REJECTED OUR LEGISLATION TO ENCOURAGE GREATER INDUSTRIAL HARMONY BY FACILITATING INDUSTRIAL AGREEMENTS AND UNION AMALGAMATIONS. THEY HAVE REJECTED OUR ELECTORAL LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD SIMPLIFY THE COMPLEX AND TEDIOUS VOTING METHODS WHICH LEFT AUSTRALIA WITHOUT A NATIONAL PARLIAMENT BETWEEN 10 APRIL AND 9 JULY. ONLY THIS WEEK THEY REJECTED OUR BROADCASTING AND TELEVISION BILLS AND OTHER LEGISLATION TO ENCOURAGE GREATER AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE FILM AND TELEVISION INDUSTRY. ALL THESE MEASURES HAVE BEEN ENDORSED - MOST OF THEM ENDORSED TWICE - BY THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE. THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THEM - THOSE WHICH FORMED THE GROUNDS FOR THE DOUBLE DISSOLUTION - HAVE BEEN ENDORSED EMPHATICALLY AND SPECIFICALLY. YET THE OPPOSITION PERSISTENTLY BLOCKS THEM.

THIS PATTERN OF OBSTRUCTION IS A TRAVESTY OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM AND A TRAVESTY OF DEMOCRACY. THROUGHOUT THE WORLD THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM IS UNDER CHALLENGE: IN EUROPE, IN NORTH AMERICA, EVEN IN BRITAIN ITSELF. NOWHERE IS THE SYSTEM SO STRONG THAT IT CAN SUSTAIN THESE ATTACKS ON ITS BASIC FOUNDATIONS. THE OPPOSITION SENATORS - I CERTAINLY DO NOT BLAME THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION FOR THEIR CONDUCT FOR HE IS POWERLESS TO CONTROL THEM - ARE NOT JUST ATTACKING THE LABOR GOVERNMENT. THEY HAVE DECLARED WAR ON THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM, ON THE ABILITY OF DULY ELECTED GOVERNMENTS TO GOVERN EFFECTIVELY AND CARRY THROUGH THEIR PROGRAM WITH THE FAITH AND CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE.

IN IMPLEMENTING OUR PROGRAM, ONE OF OUR PRIMARY TASKS HAS BEEN TO IMPROVE THE INSTITUTIONS SERVING THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US. WE HAVE NEVER BEEN READY TO ACCEPT THE METHODS OR THE MACHINERY WE INHERITED FROM OUR PREDECESSORS. TO DO SO WOULD HAVE MEANT ACCEPTING THEIR VALUES AND PRIORITIES. THROUGHOUT THIS YEAR WE HAVE CONTINUED THE PROCESS OF GATHERING INFORMATION, MAKING IT PUBLIC AND REFORMING THE INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT. OUR EARLIER REFORMS ARE BEARING FRUIT. THE GRANTS COMMISSION, WHOSE CHARTER WE AMENDED LAST YEAR TO ENABLE IT TO DEAL WITH INEQUALITIES BETWEEN REGIONS, HAS BROUGHT IN ITS FIRST HISTORIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GRANTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES. WE HAVE ACCPETED THOSE RECOMMENDATIONS IN FULL AND MADE GRANTS TOTALLING \$56 MILLION TO LOCAL COUNCILS THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA. THOSE GRANTS ARE AMONG OUR PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENTS. AGAIN, LAST YEAR, WE ESTABLISHED AN EXPERT AND IMPARTIAL SCHOOLS COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND GRANTS TO AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS ON THE BASIS OF NEED. THE FIRST FULL YEAR'S GRANTS ARE NOW FLOWING TO SCHOOLS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS, AND WE HAVE ADJUSTED THE AMOUNTS OF THESE GRANTS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF RISING PRICES.

WE HAVE ESTABLISHED NEW BODIES TO ADVISE US AND IMPLEMENT OUR POLICIES. WE HAVE APPOINTED AN INTERIM COMMITTEE FOR A NEW CHILDREN'S COMMISSION, WHICH WILL PLAN AND CO-ORDINATE OUR PROGRAMS FOR CHILD CARE AND OTHER SERVICES. WE ARE ESTABLISHING AN OVERSEAS TRADING CORPORATION AND AN AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE COUNCIL. WE HAVE EXTENDED THE POWERS OF THE PRICES JUSTIFICATION TRIBUNAL TO COVER RETAIL PRICES AND THE PRICES OF IMPORTED GOODS. WE HAVE FORMED AN EXPERT COMMITTEE REPRESENTING INDUSTRY, GOVERNMENT AND THE TRADE UNIONS TO ADVISE US ON POLICIES FOR MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES. WE HAVE ESTABLISHED AN EXPORT FINANCE AND INSURANCE CORPORATION. AFTER MONTHS OF OBSTRUCTION BY THE OPPOSITION WE HAVE AT LAST SET UP OUR PETROLEUM AND MINERALS AUTHORITY TO SAFEGUARD AUSTRALIAN OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF OUR RESOURCES. WE HAVE HAD THE BENEFIT OF A GREEN PAPER IN THE PROBLEMS OF RURAL INDUSTRY. THERE ARE CURRENTLY NO FEWER THAN EIGHT ROYAL COMMISSIONS INQUIRING INTO MATTERS OF SOCIAL IMPORTANCE. PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THEM, THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION HEADED BY DR. H.C. COOMBS, HAS UNDERTAKEN THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE INQUIRY INTO THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS. OTHER ROYAL COMMISSIONS ARE DEALING WITH THE MARITIME INDUSTRY, LAND TENURES, THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY, INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY, TASMANIAN TRANSPORT COSTS AND HUMAN RELATIONS. IN ADDITION THIS YEAR WE HAVE APPOINTED TWENTY-FIVE COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES OF INQUIRY AND TASK FORCES TO REPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT.

DESPITE AN IRRESPONSIBLE OPPOSITION AND COMPLEX ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, WE HAVE MADE GREAT PROGRESS TOWARDS OUR GOALS IN 1974. I LIST SOME OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS TO DEMONSTRATE THE SCOPE AND IMPORTANCE OF WHAT WE HAVE DONE. WE HAVE NOT BEEN CONTENT TO REST ON OUR LAURELS OR MERELY CONTINUE THE POLICIES WE BEGAN LAST YEAR. WE HAVE NOT MERELY PROVIDED MORE MONEY FOR THINGS WE WERE DOING BEFORE, THOUGH MORE MONEY THERE HAS CERTAINLY BEEN. WE HAVE LAUNCHED NEW PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES. WE HAVE INTRODUCED OUR NATIONAL COMPENSATION SCHEME BASED ON THE COMPREHENSIVE REPORT OF JUSTICES SIR OWEN WOODHOUSE AND MEARES; WE HAVE EMBARKED ON OUR PLANS FOR A MASSIVE UPGRADING OF TECHNICAL AND FURTHER EDUCATION AND HAVE BUDGETED \$100 MILLION FOR THIS PURPOSE OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS. IN THIS WE ARE ACTING ON THE REPORT OF THE KANGAN COMMITTEE WHICH WE RECEIVED THIS YEAR. WE HAVE REACHED SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT WITH EVERY STATE EXCEPT QUEENSLAND ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LAND COMMISSIONS TO STABILISE LAND PRICES IN URBAN AREAS. WE HAVE ACCEPTED IN PRINCIPLE THE REPORT OF MR. JUSTICE E.A. WOODWARD ON LAND RIGHTS FOR ABORIGINES. WE HAVE CAUGHT UP FURTHER WITH THE SEWERAGE BACKLOG IN OUR MAJOR CITIES, INCREASED OUR GRANTS FOR URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND LAUNCHED OUR PLANS FOR A NATIONAL HIGHWAYS SYSTEM. AFTER THE PREMIERS' CONFERENCE IN JUNE WE GAVE THE STATES A VIRTUAL BLANK CHEQUE FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF WELFARE HOUSING. WE HAVE ESTABLISHED OUR LEGAL AID SERVICE AND THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE - THE FIRST OF MANY SUCH CENTRES UNDER OUR COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAM.

CERTAIN ACHIEVEMENTS THIS YEAR HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY SYMBOLIC OF OUR WHOLE PHILOSOPHY - OUR LEGISLATION AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, OUR WORK FOR WOMEN, OUR VIGOROUS AND SUCCESSFUL POLICIES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, OUR 30 PER CENT INCREASE IN OUR FOREIGN AID PROGRAM. WE HAVE CONTINUED OUR EFFORTS TO ENHANCE AUSTRALIA'S REPUTATION ABROAD AND IDENTIFY OUR PEOPLE WITH THE BEST AND MOST ENLIGHTENED MOVEMENTS IN WORLD AFFAIRS. WE HAVE CONFIRMED OUR IMPLACABLE HOSTILITY TO RACIALISM IN ALL ITS FORMS BY OUR VOTE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON SOUTH AFRICA'S MEMBERSHIP OF THE UNITED NATIONS. WE HAVE BROADENED THE RANGE OF OUR DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS BY ESTABLISHING RELATIONS THIS YEAR WITH MORE THAN 20 COUNTRIES IN AFRICA, LATIN AMERICA, MIDDLE EAST AND ASIA. WE ARE NEGOTIATING TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN, THAILAND, EAST GERMANY, THE PHILLIPINES, BULGARIA, SOUTH KOREA, LAOS, NORTH VIETNAM AND RUMANIA IN ADDITION TO THE MANY AGREEMENTS WE ESTABLISHED LAST YEAR. WE HAVE CONCLUDED, OR ARE NEGOTIATING, SCIENTIFIC OR CULTURAL AGREEMENTS WITH 14 COUNTRIES.

AUSTRALIA HAS CONTINUED TO PLAY ITS PART IN ENHANCING GLOBAL STRATEGIC, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SECURITY AND PROGRESS. WE HAVE URGED MUTUAL RESTRAINT ON THE TWO SUPERPOWERS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND GIVEN OUR SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE TO PEACE ZONE PROPOSALS AS PART OF OUR DESIGN TO STRENGTHEN THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY. WE HAVE SIGNED AN AGREEMENT WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY ON THE APPLICATION OF SAFEGUARDS PURSUANT TO RATIFICATION OF THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY AND PROPOSED THE INTRODUCTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE FOR PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS.

AUSTRALIA HAS DEMONSTRATED ITS CONCERN TO BRING ABOUT A MORE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF THE WORLD'S WEALTH AND ^{to} IMPROVE LIVING STANDARDS IN ALL COUNTRIES. WE HAVE PLEDGED \$40 MILLION TO THE UNITED NATIONS EMERGENCY PROGRAM TO ASSIST THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HARDEST HIT BY RECENT RISES IN OIL AND RELATED COMMODITY PRICES AND OTHER ADVERSE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. WE HAVE OFFERED \$20 MILLION AT THE RECENT WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE IN ROME AS AN ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO COUNTRIES STRICKEN BY FOOD SHORTAGES. WE HAVE GIVEN \$5 MILLION TO ASEAN FOR JOINT PROJECTS. WE HAVE BECOME A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL BAUXITE ASSOCIATION AND HAVE ATTENDED A RECENT MEETING OF IRON ORE EXPORTING COUNTRIES. AUSTRALIA PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE IN CARCAS AND THE WORLD POLLUTION CONFERENCE IN BUCHAREST

AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN PROMINENT IN EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND UPHOLDING THE RIGHT OF ALL PEOPLES TO LIVE IN DIGNITY AND FREEDOM. AN AUSTRALIAN INITIATIVE ON DIPLOMATIC ASYLUM WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE 29TH UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY. AUSTRALIA HAD MADE KNOWN ITS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE DETENTION OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND SUPPORTED UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS CONDEMNING THE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHILE. WE WILL MARK THE 26TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS NEXT TUESDAY BY BECOMING A PARTY TO TWO SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS ON THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF WOMEN.

HUMANITY AND ENLIGHTENMENT ABROAD ARE REFLECTED IN OUR POLICIES AT HOME. NO GOVERNMENT HAS DONE MORE FOR THOSE MOST IN NEED, FOR THE WORKING MAN AND HIS FAMILY, FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN. NEVER ONCE IN 23 YEARS, WHETHER THERE WAS INFLATION OR RECESSION, DID A LIBERAL GOVERNMENT FAIL TO LEND ITS SUPPORT TO THE EMPLOYERS IN THE NATIONAL WAGE CASE. FOR 20 YEARS UNIONS HAD BEEN ARGUING FOR THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF WAGE INDEXATION. ONLY NOW HAVE WE A GOVERNMENT TAKING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TO THE QUESTION. WE HAVE MADE A POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE INTERVENTION BEFORE THE ARBITRATION COMMISSION. WITHIN HOURS OF TAKING OFFICE WE RE-OPENED THE WAGE CASE TO SECURE EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN.

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IN MAY THIS YEAR WE SUPPORTED THE EXTENSION OF THE ADULT MINIMUM WAGE TO WOMEN. WE HAVE TAKEN NEW INITIATIVES TO PROTECT EMPLOYEES BY TRAINING AND RETRAINING PROGRAMS AND STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE.

NO ONE SHOULD BE IN ANY DOUBT ABOUT THE OPPOSITION'S POLICIES ON THE GREAT PROBLEMS BEFORE US. ONE THING IS CLEARLY IMPLICIT IN OUR OPPONENTS' PROPOSALS - THE SLASHING OF BASIC PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON SCHOOLS, WELFARE, HEALTH AND CITIES. EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES WOULD BE THE FIRST TO SUFFER.

I WANT TO EMPHASISE AS STRONGLY AS I CAN THAT THE CURRENT PROBLEM OF INFLATION IN NO WAY DOWNGRADES THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL PROGRAM - THE PROGRAM I ANNOUNCED IN 1972, THE PROGRAM I REPEATED IN MAY 1974, THE PROGRAM ONCE AGAIN ENDORSED BY THE PEOPLE IN 1974. WE SHALL GO AHEAD WITH THAT PROGRAM. IT IS CRUCIAL TO ALL OUR EFFORTS TO PROTECT THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY FROM THE BUFFETS OF ECONOMIC CHANGE AND CIRCUMSTANCE. THE FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR PROGRAM WILL GO ON TOGETHER.

WITH OUR PROGRAM WE WILL BUILD A FAIRER AND STRONGER AUSTRALIA, AN AUSTRALIA PROVIDING GREATER EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL OUR PEOPLE AND A GREATER ABUNDANCE OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES. WE ARE NOT GOING TO BE DETERRED FROM THOSE GOALS, THE GOALS ADOPTED BY THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA IN 1972 AND 1974. OUR RECORD THIS YEAR HAS BROUGHT US CLOSER TO THEM. I EMPHASISE THAT IN EVERY THING WE DO, IN ALL OUR PLANS AND DECISIONS, WE SHALL PROCEED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL SERVE ITS FULL ELECTED TERM. THAT IS THE BASIS ON WHICH WE WERE ELECTED AND THAT IS THE BASIS ON WHICH WE SHALL PROCEED.
