

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. E.G. WHITLAM, Q.C., M.P.
AT THE OPENING OF THE E.C. CLOSE CENTRE
AT GREEN HILLS, N.S.W.
ON MAY 16, 1975

I AM DELIGHTED TO BE HERE WITH YOU TODAY TO CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF THIS IMPRESSIVE E.C. CLOSE CENTRE. ALDERMAN UNICOMB IS A UNIQUELY SUCCESSFUL ADVOCATE OF INVITATIONS TO VISIT THE MAITLAND REGION. HE INSISTED THAT I COME HERE FOR THE HEART OF THE HUNTER FESTIVAL LAST OCTOBER, AND HERE I AM BACK AGAIN JUST SIX MONTHS LATER. I'M ONLY SORRY I DIDN'T MAKE IT FOR THE VINTAGE IN MARCH.

YOU MIGHT RECALL THAT I HAD INTENDED TO ACCEPT YOUR INVITATION TO LAY THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE CLOSE CENTRE A YEAR AGO YESTERDAY. UNFORTUNATELY I WAS HEAVILY INVOLVED IN AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN AT THE TIME - THE MAY 18 FEDERAL ELECTION A YEAR AGO THIS WEEKEND. MY COLLEAGUE LANCE BARNARD DEPUTISED FOR ME HERE IN GREEN HILLS AND PROMISED THAT I WOULD BE BACK FOR THE OFFICIAL OPENING. I AM GLAD THAT THE ELECTION RESULT WAS SUCH THAT I WAS ABLE TO KEEP HIS PROMISE JUST ONE YEAR LATER.

WHEN I HEARD THAT MS DAWN FRASER WOULD BE HERE THIS EVENING TO GIVE A DEMONSTRATION SWIM ALONG WITH LATER AUSTRALIAN OLYMPIANS MIKE WENDEN AND YOUR OWN WORLD RECORD BREAKING SONJA GRAY, I WAS REMINDED OF ONE OF MY EARLIEST DECISIONS AFTER BECOMING PRIME MINISTER IN DECEMBER 1972. FOR A FEW DAYS THEN, LANCE BARNARD AND I WERE THE WHOLE CABINET, AND WE DECIDED THAT THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD ENABLE DAWN FRASER TO TRAVEL TO AMERICA'S SPORTING HALL OF FAME IN FLORIDA WHERE HER AMAZING SWIMMING PROWESS HAD ENTITLED HER TO A PLACE OF HONOUR : THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN WOMAN OR MAN SO HONOURED. I AM PROUD OF THAT DECISION.

THAT DECISION WAS THE FIRST MANIFESTATION OF THE UNDERTAKING I GAVE IN OUR LABOR POLICY SPEECH FOR THE 1972 ELECTIONS, NAMELY THAT MY GOVERNMENT WOULD BE THE FIRST TO MAKE DIRECT GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES. TALKING OF THE ISSUES RAISED BY THE PROSPECT OF INCREASING LEISURE TIME, I SAID "THERE IS NO GREATER SOCIAL PROBLEM OF ALL MODERN AND WEALTHY COMMUNITIES FOR SUCH AN URBANISED NATION AS OURS, THIS MAY VERY WELL BE THE PROBLEM OF THE 1980'S; SO WE MUST PREPARE NOW, PREPARE THE GENERATION OF THE 80'S - THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF THE 70'S TO BE ABLE TO ENJOY AND ENRICH THEIR GROWING HOURS OF LEISURE".

THAT IS THE BASIS OF OUR COMMITMENT AND THE REGION - TAKING IN NEWCASTLE AND MAITLAND, CESSNOCK AND MUSWELLBROOK, THE SHIRES OF SINGLETON AND PATRICK PLAINS, MURRURUNDI AND LAKE MACQUARIE, DUNGOG AND SCONE AND GLOUCESTER - HAS BENEFITED FROM THIS POLICY.

UNDER THE 1974/75 CAPITAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (AND INCLUDING AREA IMPROVEMENT GRANTS) A TOTAL OF \$406,500 HAS BEEN ALLOCATED TO THOSE CITIES AND SHIRES BY THE AUSTRALIAN MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND RECREATION. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO THE \$37,000 MADE AVAILABLE IN 1973/74.

THIS YEAR'S GRANTS INCLUDE \$40,000 FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DRESSING FACILITIES AT THE MAITLAND OLYMPIC POOL; \$40,000 FOR THE BUILDING OF A MULTI-PURPOSE SPORTING AND ORGANISATIONAL FACILITY IN THE DUNGOG SHIRE AND \$75,000 FOR A SWIMMING COMPLEX AT CHARLESTOWN IN THE LAKE MACQUARIE SHIRE. OTHER GRANTS HAVE GONE TOWARDS IMPROVING FACILITIES AT SPORTING, PICNIC AND CAMPING SPOTS CATERING FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

TRUE, NO FEDERAL GRANT WAS MADE TOWARDS THIS MAGNIFICENT SPORTS CENTRE WHICH IS A COMMERCIAL VENTURE AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY, AND ONE WHICH CANNOT BE PRAISED TOO HIGHLY.

INDEED THE PLANNING AND OPERATION OF THIS COMPLEX MAY WELL PROVIDE A LESSON FOR MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES CONTEMPLATING ANYTHING SIMILAR FOR THEIR AREAS. THE EMPHASIS HERE IS ON PROVIDING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SPORTING FACILITIES WHICH, WHILE NOT REQUIRING TEAM PARTICIPATION, STILL ENABLE PEOPLE TO KEEP FIT AND HEALTHY NO MATTER HOW FAR REMOVED THEY MIGHT BE FROM TEAM SELECTION STANDARDS. I AM PARTICULARLY PLEASED, IN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR, TO NOTE THAT THE CENTRE CATERS FOR WOMEN'S RECREATIONAL NEEDS BY THE PROVISION NOT ONLY OF SPECIAL CLASSES BUT ALSO OF A CHILD MINDING ROOM TO MAKE ATTENDANCE AT SUCH CLASSES MORE THAN A PIPE DREAM.

TO GET BACK TO FUNDING FOR A MOMENT, PRIORITY SIMPLY MUST GO IN THE FIRST INSTANCE TO BUILDING UP - IN MANY CASES HELPING TO PURCHASE THE LAND FOR - PUBLIC SPORTS FACILITIES WHICH HAVE LIMPED ALONG FOR SO MANY YEARS WITHOUT ASSISTANCE FROM EITHER STATE OR FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS. THE VERY IDEA OF HAVING SEPARATE DEPARTMENTS OF TOURISM AND RECREATION IS A RECENT ONE, QUITE BEYOND THE WILDEST DREAMS OF GENTLEMEN LIKE MR. EDWARD CHARLES CLOSE AFTER WHOM THIS CENTRE IS NAMED.

BUT SOMEONE AS INVOLVED AS HE WAS IN THE DAY-TO-DAY ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THIS AREA, WAS THE KIND OF PERSON WHO A CENTURY LATER, WOULD HAVE APPRECIATED THE NEED TO ESTABLISH COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL CENTRES FOR HIS PEOPLE.

IT IS ENTIRELY FITTING THAT THIS CENTRE SHOULD BE DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF THIS VERY SPECIAL PIONEER. I HAVE GREAT PLEASURE IN DECLARING OPEN THE E.C. CLOSE CENTRE.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE HUNTER REGION

AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE PLAN

HUNTER REGIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT HAS RECEIVED \$29,000 OF \$40,000 ALLOCATED TO THEM IN 1974/75 FOR ADMINISTRATION COSTS.

IN ADDITION \$8,600 HAS BEEN PAID OUT OF THREE ADDITIONAL GRANTS OF \$12,000 PER ANNUM EACH FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS - APPROVED FROM 1/1/75.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE - HUNTER REGION 1974/75

DENMAN SHIRE COUNCIL	\$ 37,000
DUNGOG SHIRE COUNCIL	\$ 60,000
GLOUCESTER SHIRE COUNCIL	\$ 47,000
GREAT LAKES SHIRE COUNCIL	\$ 20,000
GREATER CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL	\$342,000
LAKE MACQUARIE SHIRE COUNCIL	\$870,000
MAITLAND CITY COUNCIL	\$228,000
MERRIWA SHIRE COUNCIL	\$ 26,000
MURRURUNDI SHIRE COUNCIL	\$ 18,000
MUSWELLBROOK MUNICIPAL COUNCIL	\$ 70,000
NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL	\$716,000
PATRICK PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL	\$ 33,000
PORT STEPHENS SHIRE COUNCIL	\$130,000
SCONE SHIRE COUNCIL	\$ 62,000
SINGLETON MUNICIPAL COUNCIL	\$ 60,000
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	\$2,719,000
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RED SCHEME

MAITLAND CITY COUNCIL PROJECTS APPROVED :

GREEN HILLS LANDSCAPING	\$15,680
BROUGH HOUSE IMPROVEMENTS	\$ 4,450
BOLWARRA LOOKOUT	\$17,495
GILLIESTON HEIGHT PAVILION	\$21,900
JOHNSON RESERVE TOILET BLOCK	\$ 6,086
KERBS AND GUTTER (1)	\$33,980
HAROLD CRIGSON PARK LANDSCAPING	\$ 8,650
WOODBERRY COMMUNITY HALL	\$99,000
STREET NAME PLATES ERECTION	\$ 3,140
CLERICAL ASSISTANCE	\$12,010
KERBING AND GUTTERING (2)	\$56,780
PARK DEVELOPMENTS	\$66,668
CEMETRIES	\$44,350

GRANTS MADE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF
TOURISM AND RECREATION TO REGION NINE

1973/74 Capital Assistance Program

		\$
Dungog Shire	Basketball and tennis courts	2,000
Lake Macquarie Shire	Sporting fields, Belmont	30,000
Lake Macquarie Shire	Sporting fields, Warners Bay	5,000
	Total	<u>37,000</u>

1974/75 Capital Assistance Program (including A.I.P.)

Newcastle City	Swimming centre at Wallsend - pools and amenities	75,000
Maitland City	Maitland Olympic Pool - reconstruction and dressing facilities	40,000
Greater Cessnock City	Lighting, Kurri sports ground	7,500
Greater Cessnock City	Facilities for Stanford Mathy's Sports Ground	15,000
Singleton Municipal Shire	Amenities for James Cook Park	30,000
Patrick Plains Shire	Amenities - Warkworth Cricket Ground	8,000
Muswellbrook Municipality	Improve filtration system - White Memorial Pool	30,000
Murrurundi Shire	Paradise Park - amenities and improvement for picnicing	8,000
Murrurundi Shire	Picnic facilities and amenities, Norville Memorial Park	8,000

1974/75 Capital Assistance Program (cont.)

		\$
Scone Shire	Development of Murray Bain Oval	18,000
Dungog Shire	Building of a multi-purpose sporting and organisational facility	40,000
Dungog Shire	Provision of toilet facilities at recreation reserve	7,000
Great Lake Shire	Development of Hawkes Nest camping reserve	15,000
Great Lake Shire	Development of Hawkes Nest sporting reserve Stage 1	15,000
Gloucester Shire	Design and development of recreation facilities at Gloucester District Park	15,000
Lake Macquarie Shire	Swimming complex at Charlestown	75,000
	Total	<u>406,500</u>
	OVERALL TOTAL	<u><u>443,500</u></u>

Arts and Media Branch15 May 1975

CHILDHOOD SERVICES PROGRAM

Capital Grants Approved

Maitland Nursery School (extensions)	\$12,000	
Singleton Pre School Kindergarden (extensions)		\$28,000
Currie Currie (new Pre School)	\$31,000	

Recurrent Assistance 1974/75 till 31 March 1975

Staff Costs in Pre-School Centres

Maitland Nursery School	\$2,607	
East Maitland Kindegarden	\$4491	
Catherine Child Care, East Maitland		\$6285
Cessnock Kindergarden	\$7953	
Singleton Kindergarden	\$6699	