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Speech by the Prime Minister at Opening of Ipswich Civic Hall, July 19, 1975.

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Mr Mayor, Madam Mayoress, Treasurer, Mrs Hayden, Ministers Mrs Campbell, Mrs Edwards, Senator and Mrs Bonner, Mr Marginson, M.L.A., Mrs Marginson, Mr Hales, M.L.A. Mrs Hales, Civic Fathers and Citizens.

Now this is the formal opening that I am about to perform. I did the symbolic opening two hours ago at dusk in the presence of hundreds and hundreds of the rising generation. And I believe that symbolises what this occasion means for this city. Because there were representatives, it seemed to me, of all possible youth groups in the city and round about there gathered to watch me unveil the plaque commemorating the opening of the Civic Hall. The first instalment of the great new civic centre which will embellish and exalt the heart of this ancient city - the oldest free city, I'm always told, in Queensland.

Because all the people who were watching there for the rest of their lives will remember this day, what it means to them. This Civic Hall provides facilities for a great range of activities. That the whole of the civic centre contains two whole city blocks, we will be the heart of all the activities which a modern city, a complete community should provide. And which the rising generation expects.

Now in this auditorium where I am speaking now there are many many hundreds of citizens. In the intervening two hours the Mayor and Mayoress entertained many of us in the lower ground floor. There are three rooms there, the Cunningham room, the Logan room and the Lockyer room. We were in the Cunningham room, the largest and we were very well entertained and replenished and fortified and prepared. The civic fathers did us very well indeed and we who were in the Cunningham room are grateful to them. I thought probably the Cunningham room was the most suitable place to entertain us in the intervening two hours, not only because of its size but because of its association, the fact that Alan Cunningham discovered the place. It mightn't have been appropriate to have the meeting in the Logan room because that, of course, is named after the Commandant of the Penal Settlement - the original foundation in this State. I wouldn't have minded the Lockyer room because Lockyer was a very great man and one of those whom I have always aspired to follow. His son was a very great man, a member of the old Interstate Commission, the original Interstate Commission, and he was born when the Lockyer who's remembered round here, was 71 years of age.

So, of course, we in Public life always regard Lockyer as a proper example to follow.

Now this occasion is the third that my wife and I have been here last year and this. My wife was here early last year just after the floods. I was here late in the year, some people said just before the deluge. But we've come together on this occasion, the date was arranged between the Mayor and me through the intervention of Bill Hayden, who is, I'm certain, about to effect a successful transition from the most enlightened and benevolent Minister for Social Security the country has ever had to the greatest of Australian Treasurers.

But you know, and I can never forget, he is also the M.P. for Oxley. And he deliberately arranged, I'm certain, for this opening to coincide with the weekend immediately before we consider the Budget. Because I believe he wanted to bring home to me the demonstration of what the Australian Government should be doing because in Ipswich we can very easily see in many ways what it can do in respect to local government and civic and community facilities.

A few years ago it would have been remarkable to ask a Prime Minister to open any Municipal civic facility such as this. In fact, I receive a remarkable number of such invitations these days - from Cairns to here, over the border to Murwillumbah and so on. And I think it is because my Government is the first Australian Government which has accepted a responsibility in respect to local government. And the Mayor has already mentioned some of them. I think next Tuesday we start clearing the site for the Humanities Building - \$800,000 - part of the Regional Employment Development Scheme. But last year, last financial year, for the first time the Australian Government asked the Australian Parliament to make provision for grants to local governments. And it did so on advice of an expert impartial body, the Grants Commission, and Ipswich got about \$360,000 to spend as it wished. Brisbane got more, \$2 million, more than any place in Australia. But you've got more than most. And then I recall that last financial year there was \$840,000 provided for the National Sewerage Program for Ipswich; \$200,000 for Child Minding Centres; another \$800,000 for Regional Employment Development; there is going to be a \$1½ million office block; and then there is going to be a Queensland Government Office Block which means that in these two blocks citizens will be able to have all facilities provided by local government, State government, Federal government handy to each other. Very puzzling for citizens to know where they can get assistance or advice from elected representatives. It will be easier than most places to find out and to get the assistance and advice in Ipswich because they will all be adjacent to each other in proper buildings. The staff will be servicing their fellow citizens in a convenient spot and decent building.

Then I should mention Community Health Centre in East Street and the Australian Legal Aid Office. In all these respects I think can be seen, that there have been initiatives which mean that if citizens want professional advice, medical or legal, if they want Governmental advice, if they need municipal facilities, public facilities, then they are on the way to being provided.

It's a very happy moment, indeed, for me to come to Ipswich first, so that one can see these things properly arranged side by side, planned ahead. This is the largest building erected in Ipswich for very many years. In the heart of the city there are other buildings to follow. A whole range of facilities which we can't provide as individuals or as families will now be provided through proper cooperation, local, State and Federal, in the heart of this old city, this city which from now on will have as modern and appropriate facilities as any city in Australia.

Thank you very much indeed for asking my wife and me to be with you on this opening night. We are enjoying ourselves immensely. And looking at all the people as we come in, I'm certain we can be proud to think that as ratepayers, as taxpayers, as electorate persons, as citizens, we are building well for the future of this regional centre, this great provincial city, this oldest free city in Queensland. And as I come into your airport, Amberley itself, to go back tonight to Canberra, I realise how easy it is to get here, how pleasant it is and when you're here how hospitable the place is.

Mr Mayor, Madam Mayoress thank you very much for your invitation on behalf of your fellow citizens to me and my wife to come here at the inauguration of the Ipswich Civic Centre and in particular to the opening of the Ipswich Civic Hall. I wish well to everybody who comes to this auditorium, everybody who partakes of the hospitality in the lower ground floor; all the people who come to the seminars, the exhibitions, that will be held week in, week out, in this great building - the Centre of Ipswich, the revived exalted part of this city.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I now declare officially open the Ipswich Civic Hall.

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