



**PRIME MINISTER**

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ADDRESS AT THE LAUNCHING OF A BOOK BY GUY BOYD

The last time I took part in a presentation with Guy Boyd he was making the presentation. At that time we were in the middle of a somewhat dramatic course of events and Guy Boyd was offering some very welcome support.

The work that he presented obviously brought us luck. It was followed very shortly by the greatest election victory in Australia's history.

You will understand therefore why it is a very special pleasure for me today to be taking part in a presentation of a book on Guy Boyd's outstanding work.

In presenting this book on behalf of Guy Boyd, I hope that it will have an enormous publishing success. It certainly deserves to.

There must be an exceptional challenge to both artist, authors and publisher in presenting the work of a distinguished sculptor in book form.

Having browsed through an early copy of this book which was sent to me I am impressed by the quality of the photography and the sense of the works which the photographs convey. I am not surprised to hear that the book has taken two years to prepare, or that many of the sculptures had to be specially treated so they could be effectively photographed.

The authors Anne Von Bertouch and Professor Patrick Hutchings have provided a fine accompaniment to the photographs and I am sure that Guy Boyd must be delighted with the product.

Lansdowne Editions are to be congratulated on their enterprise in producing this volume.

The recognition of Guy Boyd's work by this book is a tribute to the quality of his skill and the wish of many people that his work be more widely accessible.

Guy Boyd's work has been exhibited widely in Australia, and overseas. This book will help to bring it to a still wider audience. Guy Boyd's work - indeed the work of his whole family - illustrates the great vitality of artistic life in Australia - a vitality too often underrated.

Through his work, Guy Boyd has helped to make this vitality known to people overseas as well as at home. In exhibiting his work in other countries, Guy Boyd of course joins that very distinguished band of Australians who are making Australian art a vital part of the international artistic culture.

It must be of great value to Australian art for such interchanges to take place - for the best of Australian art to be exhibited abroad and for the best art of other countries to come to Australia.

Ensuring that Australians have access to the best art of other countries is one area where I believe the Government can have a useful role. Indeed, I believe, more generally, that the Government can have a constructive role to play in encouraging and facilitating the development of Australia's artistic life. Such a role must always be treated with caution - the tastes of Governments are not renowned for their great sophistication. And when Governments rely on the tastes of a few they run the risk of favouring one section of the arts, one school, over another.

If Government is to take a role in the encouragement of artistic endeavour it must do so with great sensitivity. In the absence of such sensitivity it would be all too easy for our artistic life to be distorted by the whims of a few.

There is hardly an area of the arts where Australia has not excelled. The growing vitality of the arts in Australia is largely spontaneous but can certainly be helped by well-conceived actions of the Government.

Previous Federal Liberal and Country Party Governments took a keen interest in encouraging the creative and performing arts in Australia. They established the Commonwealth Literary Board, the Australian National Gallery, the Arts Council and they took the first steps in the establishment of the Film Corporation. I am pleased to recall that as Minister I took an active part in establishing the Canberra School of Music.

A Government Parties Committee has now been established under the Chairmanship of David Hamer to assist it in developing the arts in Australia. During the Parliamentary recess this Committee will be visiting all States and meeting with people involved in the arts.

I have been personally concerned that the Government's activities in promoting creative artists endeavour in Australia should remain with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Committee I have just referred to will be reporting directly to me.

You will all know that the Government is very concerned at the present time to review all areas of Government spending. Cabinet, in fact, has been meeting over the last few days for precisely this purpose. Every area of Government spending is being examined in the enquiry we are presently making.

I need hardly say that Government activities in the arts are along with every other area, under very close examination at present.

I do not want to pre-empt the results of that examination - which is still proceeding - by being too specific in my comments today, but the Government's commitments should not be in doubt. Let me re-emphasise the broad purposes of the Government in this area.

We fully intend to encourage the continued growth and development of the arts in Australia. In particular, it is our intention to encourage the development of Australian art rather than costly purchases overseas. We intend, for example, to give effect to the National Gallery's policy of giving priority to the purchase of Australian arts.

Alongside this policy, Australia must of course be open to influence from overseas. Great art inevitably must cross political frontiers. We have announced our intention to support a more vigorous sponsorship of exhibitions which will give Australians ready access to the arts and culture of other countries.

Australians are and ought to be in the vanguard of the artistic world. Australia is more than an efficient economy. Australia can be part of a vital world culture and the Government intends to play a part in encouraging this development.

Guy Boyd and the other members of his family have made an enormous great contribution to the growth of Australian artistic life. I am delighted that in this book Guy Boyd's sculptural contribution has been recognised.

I have much pleasure in launching this book.

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