



PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

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OPENING OF GUILDFORD YOUNG GROVE - HOBART

This is a very special day for the people of Hobart. It is a most significant day in the continuing development of this wonderful city.

I am delighted and honoured to be with you today to open this fine complex. The Knights of the Southern Cross, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd - and of course the people of Hobart - can take pride in the wonderful achievements.

I'm also very pleased to be able to publicly pay tribute to the work of His Grace Archbishop Young. I speak not only on behalf of the national government and of the Tasmanian community, but also on behalf of all of us 'mainlanders'.

The special dedication of the Guildford Young Grove to His Grace is to me a most fitting tribute to a man who has dedicated 22 years to achievements and leadership in the Archdiocese of Hobart.

Of course, the completion of this complex and this ceremony this afternoon has wider implication than appears on the surface.

This day is surely a classic illustration of one of the real strengths of Australian society. And that is the willingness of men, women and children from all walks of life to work together for the wider benefit of the community.

It's an example of what can happen when people toil tirelessly and selflessly - when they 'put in' - to help those less able to help themselves.

There is no doubt that the people responsible for this day lived the unwritten law that says - "It's not what you can get out of life, but what you can put into it".

I am especially pleased to perform this ceremony today because the Liberal NCP Governments social welfare philosophy places great emphasis on cooperative effort by community groups. We believe that interaction by individuals, groups and government - at all levels - is absolutely necessary for an effective approach to social welfare.

Only if community groups define their own needs - without unnecessary government interference - will we have the diversity, choice and quality that we all want. We believe that all those dedicated people who make up the backbone of voluntary welfare organisations make an irreplaceable contribution to the continuing growth and maturing of our great nation.

You all know that we are committed to encouraging the kind of self help the building of this complex exemplifies. But let none of you think that the government then takes a step back and marches away. Let me be perfectly clear. We do not regard the efforts and of voluntary associations as an excuse for inactivity by the government. Rather, we seek to enhance the effectiveness of voluntary welfare action.

In this case, the Commonwealth Government overall has contributed almost \$1 million towards capital costs.

Since 1962 aged housing projects sponsored by the Southern Cross Association have received \$6.6 million assistance. But let's face it, money alone will not solve all problems. Much more is required.

Professor Henderson, after detailed investigation into Australian poverty, also came to this conclusion. Professor Henderson's report said that Australian governments should be wary of: "Falling into the inflationary trap of attempting to carry out so many social reforms or other public expenditures at once that they accelerate an inflationary spiral that does more damage to poor people than the assistance provided by the reforms."

So money is not enough. However, the way in which assistance is provided is of critical importance. Assistance should be provided in a way which helps people to be independent.

The resources a poor family needs to break out of poverty include information about opportunities in the social security system as well as money.

Of course, many social welfare problems are not intrinsically financial. Rather, they are problems of human relationships, of organisation, and of approach.

For example, a great deal has been spent on education over the past few years. School buildings and facilities have been improved. Yet despite this it is evident that our system of education is still far from perfect. The core of education remains the quality of the educational experience. And this is effected by the quality of teachings, the way the school is organised, attitudes of teachers and parents - in other words, the relationship of school to family and the world beyond.

It's not money - but organisation, approach.

I said earlier that we do not regard the efforts of voluntary organisations as an excuse for inactivity by government. My Government's fundamental aim has been to provide assistance to those most in need in such a way that the community can afford the cost.

We've done just this - through family allowances and personal income tax indexation. Our family allowance scheme benefits 300,000 Australian families and 800,000 children - many of whom are below the poverty line. It has been hailed as the major reform in the Australian welfare system since Federation.

Tax indexation will give protection for those hundreds of thousands of wage earners with large families near the minimum income.

The frail and aged in the Australian community have received special care from the Government. From July 1 this year, the Government introduced a three year programme to assist the building of aged persons homes. \$45 million will be provided this financial year and a further \$180 million in the next two years.

This three years programme will allow urgently needed accommodation to be provided for about 15,000 aged people throughout Australia.

It will also assist voluntary organisations by ensuring a continuing of planning and building for the next three years. They will be able to borrow in this first year against the allocation for the remaining two years.

The Government has also established a Committee into the Aged and the Infirm. The Committee will report on the effectiveness and efficiency of existing Government programmes for the aged and infirmed.

The inquiry will assist the Government in deciding on a cohesive framework for meeting the needs of this area of social welfare. This Government believes that individual, group and government participation is necessary to carry out an effective social welfare policy. This complex stands as a monument to the validity of our belief.

It is a magnificent result for your own endeavours and a fitting tribute to your Archbishop. I have great pleasure in declaring "Guildford Young Grove" officially open.

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