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PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

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ELECTORATE TALK

One year ago the men and women of Australia gave the Liberal-National Country Party coalition the job of restoring responsible management to the nation's affairs.

Australians knew then the job could not be completed overnight. Australians knew that our economic problems were deep-seated and that the return to economic strength and stability would take time.

I told the nation that to start Australia back on the road to recovery would take three years. I said there were no short cuts - no easy options.

Today, we are on the road to completing that first task.

We are on the way to beating inflation, creating jobs on a sound, long term basis, and establishing the conditions where individuals are again in a position to make important decisions as they see fit.

For twelve months, the central aim of my Government has been to fight and to beat inflation.

That central aim remains. We are still absolutely and unashamedly committed to beat inflation. If we were not - and if we were to turn our central thrust elsewhere - we would be abandoning our promise to the Australian electorate.

As I have repeatedly stated since our devaluation decision, my Government's resolve to fight inflation is stronger than ever.

I want to make it clear, however, that this fight is not pursued at the total exclusion of all other policies.

The Government is aware of the unfair burdens that have been placed on particular sections in the community because of the deep seated effects of run-away inflation.

We recognised the seriousness of this problem immediately we took office. And we took action to overcome it.

Our family allowance scheme was designed specifically to protect the low income earning families against the immediate damaging effects of inflation.

Our full indexation of personal income tax - while it does not remove the injustices of the tax scale - has prevented tax payers being further disadvantaged.

These two measures alone - and there are many more - demonstrate that the Government's fight against inflation is not a fight that takes place to the exclusion of all else.

We can - and we have - shown our real desire to right the many social injustices in the community. We will not lose sight of this responsibility and obligation.

The next twelve months will be critical for Australia. It will be as important a year as we have faced in Australia for a long while.

All Australians have a stake in our future. We can all contribute to solving national problems and so get on with the job of rebuilding this nation.

The Government will do what it can in crucial areas. We will continue with our successful anti-inflation strategies.

We will continue to press strongly for wage restraint and moderation. We will continue our scrutiny of the services provided by the Commonwealth. We will continue to create the kind of economic climate where real production can thrive. It is here - in the manufacturing, mining and rural base - that three out of every four Australian workers find jobs. It is here that our national wealth is created.

The Government, however, cannot succeed without the support of the people it represents.

Too often there are too many people who seek to highlight differences that exist in the community.

We cannot afford this attitude in Australia at this critical time.

If we are to overcome inflation and create the circumstances where families can live the lives they want, there ought to be a greater effort to define and emphasise the common ground that exists between the vast majority of Australians.

I make the point here that I do not necessarily think that I as Prime Minister, or the Liberal National Country Party coalition, have adequately pursued areas of common ground. It is something we can strive harder for - it is certainly a worthwhile objective.

Whether we are employers, employees, businessmen, farmers - whether we vote for the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, or the National Country Party - we must not lose sight of the fact that above all else we are Australians.

As Australians we all have an overriding common interest .
We can, and we should, work much harder and spend more time
at seeking out those things we each have in common.

Until that happens, Australia will be the loser.

We do have a country that is the envy of most of the free world.
We have a future that is unequaled anywhere in the world.

It is with this future that we are now involved. I believe it
is worth fighting for, and worth making sacrifice.
