



12

PRIME MINISTER

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ADDRESS BY PRIME MINISTER AT THE AUSTRALIA DAY CEREMONY, SYDNEY

Today we are celebrating the 189th anniversary of the foundation of Australia by Captain Arthur Phillip. Since that impoverished penal colony struggled to survive in an inhospitable and isolated land, successive generations of Australians have faced great challenges and worked together to surmount them. Men and women from all the world's nations have made their home in Australia seeking in their own way to build a better life for themselves and their children.

Australia has been a refuge for those who have been displaced by war, a free society for those escaping from oppressive regimes, a land of equality and opportunity where class distinction is abhorrent, and where the racial, political and class conflicts which divide many less fortunate societies are absent.

We as a people have the greatest opportunity that a nation could ask for. We have the opportunity to use our national resources and our national capacities to create a better society, to deal with the problems of poverty, ignorance and inequity which unfortunately still exist in our nation.

But too many people take the well being of Australia for granted, believing that it does not require effort or contribution. They take for granted the opportunity, the freedom, the material and political equality, and the precious if imperfect, democratic processes that characterise our society. There is an inadequate understanding of the fact that democracy is not only the greatest enterprise in human freedom, but also the most fragile. We must face this fact and confront the challenges to our democratic system lest this greatest enterprise in human freedom fail.

One of the problems confronting us today is the expectation of some people that they are entitled to get whatever they demand, regardless of the impact of their demands on other people. When this expectation is frustrated, they assert the right to inconvenience the whole community. Such expectations are both irrational and incompatible with our democratic processes. Yet is not this just what too many have come to expect from Australia. This expectation takes many forms. People expect higher wages, no matter what the consequences for the economy and the effect on other people. They fail to point out that other weaker groups must suffer to pay for their demands; that

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at any single point in time, if one group gets more, other weaker groups must get less. One group most affected by this process is the unemployed. Higher demands for wages have been satisfied at their expense.

There is another way people demand more - they ask Governments to provide more subsidies, benefits and programmes - regardless of the consequences, pretending that these demands cost nothing. Too often, Governments have failed by pretending that they could provide without cost, and without limit, that programmes were free. Politicians and Governments neglected to point out that they had nothing of their own to give - that their promises were to be paid for by taking money away from people such as yourselves - by higher taxation or by inflation. People and Governments have fed off one another's weaknesses. People have wanted more at no cost; Governments have sought popularity through promises. These two weaknesses pose a great threat to democracy. If they are to be overcome people must develop a greater awareness of the things that Governments can and cannot do. People must question their own demands on Government. Governments must foster this awareness and tell the truth more plainly. When Governments promise any programmes, they must make it plain that all the people of Australia must pay. The day of the cargo cult must be banished.

On Australia Day 1977 let us all as Australians ask ourselves what are the values that cause us to cherish Australia. What makes us proud to be Australians. What are the values that have caused us to make this our home. Then let all of us - those born here and overseas, ask what we have done in past years that has enhanced these values. What have we done that may have weakened them. Or have we merely taken them for granted and not thought at all. Then, what do we intend for today and tomorrow, 1977 and beyond. Are we just going to take Australia for granted or will we dedicate ourselves to enhancing the values we all share and to working for the better Australia of which we all dream.
