



PRIME MINISTER

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ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE AUSTRALIA DAY FAIR: ADELAIDE

I am delighted to be able to open this Australia Day Fair.

When Governor Phillip raised the Union Jack at Camp Cove 189 years ago, I am sure he could not have imagined the immense progress that Australia would make in the relatively short time span of 189 years. For the first few years following the historic flag raising, the early settlers celebrated the occasion as "Anniversary Day". Not that there was much cause for celebration. Things were tough, crops were hard to cultivate and stocks were, for the first years at least, meagre. But the first Australians came through it, and since those days Australians have faced great challenges together and overcome them.

Men and women from all the world's nations have come to live in Australia seeking in their own way to build a better life for themselves and their children. In the last thirty years, more than three million migrants have come to Australia, attracted by the opportunities which Australia offers, Australia's freedom and its equality.

This Fair was inaugurated by the Good Neighbour Council in 1975 to invite South Australians to acknowledge and participate in the commemoration of Australia Day. The Fair demonstrates that Australia is a multicultural community and has benefited immensely from the mixture of cultures. Ethnic arts and craft displays take their place in this Fair alongside surf life saving displays, emergency fire fighting displays, demonstrations, marching girls, gymnastics and folk dancing from many countries. Ethnic cultures have added a new dimension of diversity and richness to the traditions of those other migrants, the English, Scots and Irish. What is emerging from this is a distinctive Australian culture which is derived from the best all cultures can offer.

Fortunately, the days of Anglo-Saxon conformity are over, and I believe that we are all better off as a nation and as individuals because of this. One can love Australia and participate effectively in Australian life - as is obvious today while retaining an affection and preserving the heritage of one's culture and origin. The number of people who refuse to recognise this are rapidly diminishing and this is as it should be.

/Today

Today we are a nation of 13.5 million people and one quarter of our people were either born overseas or are the children of migrants. Without the contribution made by migrants, we would be limited in both our achievements and our aspirations, limited in our capacity to grasp the promise Australia holds out. We would be poorer economically, demographically and culturally. A great contribution has been made by ethnic groups to Australia's culture, and Australia should, in turn, make a contribution to enhancing and preserving the culture of the countries from which migrants came.

This Fair is a particularly appropriate place to announce that the Australian Government will be contributing \$100,000 to the appeal for the preservation of the Acropolis, which UNESCO is undertaking in conjunction with the Greek Government. The Acropolis is one of the most magnificent achievements of human civilisation. To this day it is still looked to as the foundation and inspiration of our architecture, and it must be the greatest symbol of the Greek civilisation which contributed so fundamentally to western civilisation. The Acropolis, having been pillaged by the citizens of numerous nations in the past, some under the pretext that they were protecting its treasures, has now been attacked by a more modern enemy - atmospheric pollution. Pollution has been eroding the marble surfaces and other stones, and there is an urgent need for restoration work. The monies from the appeal will be used to carry out this work. Our contribution to the appeal is a token of Australia's regard both for the architectural splendour of the Acropolis and for the contribution made by Greeks to Australian society. It is a demonstration of our recognition that Australia is a vital multi-cultural society, and of our concern with the former homelands of all Australian citizens.

Today, while we are celebrating Australia Day as a holiday, I believe we should all reflect on Australia's past, her present and her future. We should reflect on the values that make us proud of Australia and led us to make Australia our home. We should reflect on what we have done to strengthen these values and what we may have done to weaken them. We should reflect on whether we have just taken our values for granted and not thought at all. Then we should reflect on what we are going to do about making Australia the better place of which we all dream.
