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PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

31 JANUARY, 1978

AUSTRALIA DAY MESSAGE

On this Australia Day holiday, it's good to pause and think for a moment about those things that give us a sense of national identity, of unity, a sense of pride in being Australian. It is good to stop and think about where we are heading as a nation, as one people. Of course, it is not just a question of thinking, it is also a question of acting.

Like any other group of people, Australians are a product of the experiences they have had together and of the history, tradition and culture that many people have brought to us from other lands.

We have been through good times. We have helped each other through tough times, through war, through depression, through flood, and again this summer through bushfires and drought. Through it all we have built roads and great cities in Australia. We have established great factories and farms. We have set up vast mining projects in many parts of the country. We have established a whole complex civilisation in Australia, and when we get right down to it, Australia is one of the best places to live in and to bring up a family.

We have experienced many things together. We have achieved a great deal. We share common values and aspirations: the need to see that Australia grows and prospers; the need to see that everyone has a fair go; a common commitment to freedom; protecting people from unfairness and injustice. But sometimes we take all of this for granted.

We give too much weight to divisions and conflicts when we should be acting together for common aims and objectives. Politicians emphasise too much the differences they have with each other when they should be working to build on those things that unite us all.

We all know that Australia can be made a better country, that by working together, we can create an Australia in which there is security and stability so we can plan our own and our family's future; in which there is social justice and equal opportunity for all Australians no matter what their colour, their background, or their occupation may be; an Australia that shows care and concern for the disadvantaged and which rewards initiative and enterprise in individuals.

Your Government is committed to working for these objectives. It is part of our vision for Australia's future; to bring out the things we agree on, not allow ourselves to be distracted by partisan interests, by sectional demand.

Australia is a diverse country with many different ideas, but we are agreed on the great fundamental objectives that we ought to be pursuing as a nation. We can achieve the things that tie us together. We can achieve the great ideals that we all share.

This isn't just a task for Government. It is a task for all Australians. We have achieved so much working together as one people, yet so much remains to be done, not only for ourselves, but for those who follow. Let's work at it together.

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