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EXTRACT FROM SPEECH AT
NSW YOUNG LIBERALS AND NSW SENATORS' COCKTAIL PARTY

The Young Liberal Movement has a vital role to play in providing the training ground and support for the future leaders of this State and Australia as a whole. In addition, it's contribution to policy formulation is well known and highly valued, especially where there are issues of special concern to young people.

The Young Liberals played a big part in the Government's decision to establish the Office of Youth Affairs, and has taken a keen interest in its operation ever since. It also made important representations to the Government, just prior to the recent formation of the new Department of Employment and Youth Affairs under Ian Viner.

I know the Young Liberals' interest will continue to be of invaluable assistance to the Government in this and other areas. In ways such as these, the Young Liberal Movement is playing an important part in Federal and State political affairs.

The benefits the Government receives from New South Wales doesn't stop there. In the Federal Parliament we are fortunate to have Senators of the calibre of Senator Carrick, Senator Baume, Senator Lajovic, and Senator Puplick. Their efforts, both within the Ministry and in the Senate itself, have in no small way enabled the Government to achieve the progress it has.

And we have achieved progress, despite the attempts of Bill Hayden, that prophet of doom and gloom, to talk down our successes. Inflation has been reduced; business confidence has returned; investment has increased dramatically; large developments are in the offing, and Australian businesses are once again competitive.

The employment situation is of continuing concern to us, but it is only by pursuing our firm commitment to beating inflation will there be jobs for all those that want them. Already there are heartening signs of improvement in the labour market. Civilian employment, seasonally adjusted, has been rising. Overtime is now over three hours a week per employee, seasonally adjusted, the first time this has happened since 1974.

These are early signs, but they are encouraging. We all have a responsibility to see that our policies and our achievements are placed before the people of Australia and understood by them so that Australians will never again let their affairs be managed by those political and economic bankrupts who were in Government between 1972 and 1975. And we must not forget that Australia's State Socialist governments are still putting forward the same irresponsible policies.

The Wran government has decided that thousands of power workers in this State will have a 37½ hour week. The State Industrial Commission denied the Commonwealth the opportunity to put forward the national consequences of granting these new conditions.

The Wran government seeks to achieve the 37½ hour week by legislating arbitrarily and capriciously, without awaiting the Industrial Commission's decision. This is totally against the national interest. With a large majority in the State Parliament, Labor's true Socialist colours are now showing through. The extreme left in New South Wales is demonstrating its power. Inevitably, the decision will create demands for flow-ons, will add to labour costs, and lead to inflationary pressures, and can only put Australians out of work.

If there are productivity gains in the industry, they should be used in the battle against inflation. They should be passed on in lower prices to the home owners and industries of this State.

The Commonwealth condemns the Wran government's irresponsible action. The States now receive Commonwealth funds under guarantee provisions that give them protection against wage increases. We will not continue to support by way of guarantee a system of State funding which is used to underwrite such wage increases by providing automatic adjustments for changes in the average level of Australian wage increases.

Mr Wran's government can increase its wage bill but not have to meet the whole cost itself, because it automatically gets more funds from the Commonwealth. We shall be taking this up at the next Premier's Conference. We cannot and we will not ignore this irresponsible action by the Wran government.