



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

15 MAY 1979

LAUNCHING OF THE SIR ROBERT MENZIES MEMORIAL TRUST APPEAL

(SPEECH AS DELIVERED)

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to support His Excellency in the remarks he made this morning to launch the appeal for the Sir Robert Menzies Memorial Foundation. I am sure that the appeal will have a very ready response right around Australia, in all States and from all people, in all walks of life throughout Australia.

We may be still too close to Sir Robert Menzies' own time to be able to assess fully the mark that he left on Australian life, on political life, on the character and development of Australia. But as time passes I believe that his role will be written in even firmer terms than might be by some contemporary historians. The character that he imparted to this nation, the leadership that he gave to Australians through many times, as a Parliamentarian and as a person, has no equal in Australian history.

The progress of Australia during his years was very great. It was a period of great Australian development. Australia abroad, as His Excellency the Governor-General has indicated, became a nation to be listened to for the first time. But it wasn't only in these grand things that his attention, patience and energy was directed. During his time welfare, income security for disadvantaged people, was begun in Australia in a realistic way. His concern for education was in a very real sense a personal involvement when he took the Commonwealth into the great expansion of Australian universities, the development of the National University, and the other universities around Australia. That Commonwealth support enabled an expansion to take place which surely has benefitted tens, indeed hundreds of thousands of young Australians. That, I think, is one of his greatest memorials.

The development of Canberra itself, again, owes much to Sir Robert Menzies' initiative. But something more than that is needed I believe for an Australian who has done so much for his country. Therefore, the Sir Robert Menzies National Foundation is launched today to stand as a permanent personal memorial to the service he gave Australia.

The purpose of the Foundation, as His Excellency has said, is to promote health, fitness and physical achievement for all Australians, and particularly for young Australians.

The Foundation will seek to improve our knowledge of health, to encourage better health and fitness and thereby help more Australians to lead more rewarding lives in work and recreation. It will do this by supporting research in medical schools and elsewhere into health, fitness and physical achievement, by promoting public education on these subjects and by encouraging better recreation facilities for the community.

In support of the appeal, and as the first donor, but I hope not the largest donor, I have pleasure in announcing that the Commonwealth will donate \$2 million to the appeal. We will also match all other donations on a dollar for dollar basis.

As a further gentle inducement to others to seek to match and surpass the Commonwealth's effort, donations will of course be tax deductible.

The State and National Committees of the Sir Robert Menzies Memorial Trust have given freely of their time and searched for the best memorial, the best purpose. I believe they have come out well. I would like to thank the members of the State and National Committees for what they have done to this point, but I suspect that over the next three or four months the greatest time and energy will be involved.

It is very much an investment in the future -- an investment in the future of Australia, but particularly an investment in the future of young Australians.

Your Excellency, I believe it is a fitting tribute indeed to Sir Robert Menzies.

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