



EMBARGO: 7:00 pm

5

PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

SUNDAY, 25 JANUARY, 1981

AUSTRALIA DAY MESSAGE

This Australia Day, I am going to talk about some of the changes which will be taking place in Australia within the next few years. Changes we have worked to bring about - changes that we can greet with optimism and that will benefit all the Australian people.

At a time when many countries are facing a difficult future, we can look forward with a sense of expectation and enthusiasm to the prospects ahead of us.

Great changes are at work in Australia which will affect every corner of our national life. New technology is already transforming our lives. The Australian satellite will shortly bring to outback Australia the kind of communications that we now take for granted in the capital cities. Such changes in communications will bring us closer together as a people.

We must look closely at our education system to make sure that it does its utmost to prepare young people to work with, to feel at home with, and to benefit from the great innovations that are taking place. Already there is widespread concern that education must do more for young people than is currently the case. The recent Schools' Commission Report put the problem bluntly when it said: "...many students experience a curriculum unsuited to their needs or interests and from which they gain little of a positive nature..." Such criticism represents a challenge to all Governments and schools to get on with doing a better job.

There will be other changes also. There will be changes in the role of Government and a growing acceptance that individuals are the best judges of how they should order their own lives.

One of the most valued ideals in Australia throughout our history, has been that each individual matters. In the years ahead we must stand for that ideal as never before.

Some of the most important changes will come from the development of our great energy and natural resources. In the nineteenth century, the gold rush made possible the first great period of prosperity and growth in Australia. It was an age in which Australia became recognised as a land of great opportunities for everybody.

.../2

Today we are not in the midst of a gold rush but rather an energy and resources rush. Mighty energy and resource projects are underway. There's the North West Shelf project to tap natural gas in Western Australia; the Rundle shale oil project in Queensland; Roxby Downs in South Australia; and electricity programmes in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria which could well exceed the scope of the Snowy Mountains Scheme.

These developments are taking place in a way which will benefit not just a few but all Australian families. Towns are being built; jobs are being created. They will produce increased wealth which will enable better real wages and salaries; and improved help to those in need.

I express tonight the firmest possible determination to see that the prosperity flowing from these great ventures will lift the living standard of every Australian family, not just of those immediately involved.

Beyond Australia, what we do with our resources will also affect the lives of countless people in other countries. Australia's energy can be a powerful force for good - lifting the hopes and expectations, improving the lives of people in other parts of the world who are anxious, even frightened about the future. Australian energy will be one of the important forces for helping mankind to a better and more humane world.

We have been called the lucky country; and we are lucky that these opportunities are before us. But we have never as a people relied just on good luck. Australia has grown as a nation because we have been prepared to work together, to build a land of which we can be proud - not just for our own sake but for the sake of our children. We will not build the Australia we want on confrontation and division. We will not build it if the selfishness and greed of a few become the model for many.

A great and significant prospect is in sight because the policies of freedom that are part of our national heritage encourage the enterprise and initiative of our people; and because Australians now have the confidence to plan for themselves, their families - for Australia.

Much is within our grasp but we cannot take our future success for granted. We must be prepared to work for our country and community as well as ourselves. We must recognise that there are problems, in some areas very substantial ones. For example, the level of industrial disputes must worry many good trade unionists as it does other Australians. In areas like this, we must increasingly resolve to do better, to work together rather than in opposition. For if we think about it, our interests, as Australians are not competitive but complementary.

Australia is today like a young person on the threshold of adulthood, whose limbs are filling out - full of hope and expectation for the future, full of promise and optimism.

I am confident that this promise will be realised and that in this new age, the lives of all Australians and of all Australian families will be improved. It is my determination to see that this happens.

---000---