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PRIME MINISTERFOR MEDIA

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SPEECH FOR THE OPENING OF "MYER SALUTES AUSTRALIA" CAMPAIGN, DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF THE PRIME MINISTER BY THE MINISTER FOR FINANCE, SENATOR DAME MARGARET GUILFOYLE.

I am glad to be here at the official opening of the "Myer Salutes Australia" fortnight.

I think that Australia ought to be saluted more often than it is. Australia is the best country in the world to live in, and much the best for bringing up a family. We all know this, even the 'knockers' know it. It does us no harm to have a few 'knockers'. But I sometimes think it might do us some good if we had a few more 'saluters' - people prepared to say straight out how good this country is.

But although we don't always say it, Australians are proud of their nation. We are proud to be called Australians. And there are many things that we are entitled to be proud of.

This fortnight when Australia is being saluted offers us a good excuse to beat our own drum more loudly than usual, and I am pleased to make the most of the opportunity.

There was a time when many Australians tended to think an imported article would be superior to one made in Australia. Our isolation from Europe and America probably gave glamour to their products. And our small local market made it difficult for local firms to manufacture a wide range of high quality goods.

But now the picture is different. We now have behind us a wealth of experience, and in the primary, manufacturing and service sections a well-earned reputation for quality. We still have a comparatively small domestic market, but the initiative of Australians has led to some brilliant ideas and designs. Some of our manufactured goods have had amazing success in managing to break into international markets, even if sometimes only in a small way. Who would have thought that Australian cultured pearls are exported to Japan? Who would have thought that we sell shirts in Hong Kong, or shoes and swimwear in Singapore? Who would have thought that German equestrians would be passing up local saddles for Australian ones? But you will not be surprised to hear that we export cricket helmets to England.

We all know that on display in this store are Australian-made products as good as any of their kind in the world. Australian foods are outstanding by any standards. It is a pity that the governments of Europe are not welcoming towards them. Many of our manufactured goods can stand comparison anywhere. And we are winning increasing recognition in overseas markets because of this.

Australian wines have recently won important international awards and there is a growing recognition overseas that our top wines are amongst the best in the world.

The Government has been anxious to foster greater public awareness of these developments, of the quality of Australian products. It has sought and encouraged Australians to show support for their country in a practical way. And what better way is there to salute Australia than to buy Australian. For, not only does this foster national pride but also it helps Australian industries and creates more jobs for Australian workers.

Since August 1979, the Government has funded the "Project Australia Campaign" through the Project Australia Committee - a national committee of people who are leaders in their individual fields. When Project Australia began, there were many sceptics. There were smart articles which said there was nothing in it. But we stood by the idea. And slowly it has taken hold, as pride in Australian achievement grows.

The objectives of "Project Australia" are being pursued through a variety of means including nation-wide advertising, shop-front displays and promotional events. Project Australia awards have been given for inventions ranging from an international language of symbols for handicapped children to the Australian wine cask, and for contributions ranging from children's literature to solar energy technology.

A promotion to salute Australia fits in very well with the overall thrust of our campaign to project Australia. It focusses again on the need to make Australians more aware of what our country has to offer, and what we, in our turn, can do for our country. As employers and employees, as producers and consumers, we have common objectives. We do ourselves no good if we forget that we are working for the good of Australia and of other Australians - and not just for our own good.

The Project Australia campaign is complemented by other measures such as the work of the Industrial Design Council of Australia. This council aims to create an awareness and an appreciation of good design so that Australian industry can produce better and more internationally competitive goods. The council offers a wide range of services to industry and has initiated two important, and much coveted design awards - the Australian design award, and the Prince Philip Prize. The Australian Design Award is what it suggests, a recognition and a promotion of well designed, high quality Australian products. The Prince Philip Prize takes this a step further. Products are scrutinized for factors essential to good design but in the awarding of this prize, the judges

are looking for innovation as well. The impact of both these awards on Australian made products will be widely felt in the years ahead. Consumers will become more discriminating as innovative design becomes more widespread, and this will put pressure on manufacturers to offer constantly improving products.

This kind of process can become a strong force for progress. The Government also provides funding to encourage industrial research and development. Research and development grants are a recognition of the fact that to maintain efficiency industrial research is essential in matters relating to science and new technology.

We cannot afford to lag behind, for the major basis of our success has been a capacity to initiate. Above all, the Government wants to see industry become as outward looking as possible. We already offer much to other countries, but all will benefit from further expansion.

In February 1979, I launched the "Export Now" campaign, one of a package of export development initiatives to encourage Australian firms to pursue export opportunities actively.

The campaign is Australia-wide.

It is designed to increase awareness in industry and the community at large of the benefits to be obtained from developing exports. These benefits of export-orientated industries extend directly to Australian consumers because in order to compete successfully in overseas markets, greater efficiency is required, and an expansion of sales through the generation of exports will sometimes bring about economies of scale as well.

This leads to more competitive prices for the Australian consumer together with greater exposure of Australian industry to the latest ideas in world markets.

As I have said, the Government maintains programmes to generate new demands for Australian products. It is good when commerce itself contributes to the same cause.

Australians are obviously developing a much stronger awareness of what this country and its people have to offer - of the high quality and the real value of Australian products.

Promotions such as this can only further that cause.