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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

SUNDAY, 6 DECEMBER 1981

OPENING OF THE CAMPANIA CLUB

I am delighted to be at the Campania Club for this official opening because these new headquarters are a significant expression of multicultural Australia, and a tribute to the efforts and vision of the club and its members.

I will say something in a moment about the achievement which these new headquarters represent, but before I come to that, let me just say that the activities of this club, and others like it, enrich the life of the nation as a whole and contribute to a better and more diverse Australia.

Multiculturalism has taken decisive strides ahead in the last few years, especially since the Government's total acceptance of the Galbally Report three years ago, and as I said in the inaugural address on multiculturalism less than a week ago, the Government stands fully committed to the continued advancement of multiculturalism in Australia. There is obviously a great deal still to be done, and the Government is very well aware of this. But it is a great achievement of this entire nation that, at a time when many other countries are still trying to size up the challenge of cultural diversity, Australia has broken through. And we are all increasingly aware that the prospects which lie ahead as a result of that breakthrough are exciting as well as challenging, and I have no doubt that we will move ahead much more strongly as a nation because of it.

There is something else that I would like to say because at this moment, while we are celebrating this wonderful new club, with all the benefits and facilities it provides, our minds cannot help turning to the appalling earthquake last year in Southern Italy. That tragedy is something which nobody here will ever forget, for it was a disaster of massive proportions, and it affected a considerable number of people here in a very direct way indeed, in many cases through the death or injury of friends or family.

I would like again to express the sympathy which we all feel for those who suffered loss. But while none of us will forget the tragedy, neither will we forget the magnificent response

throughout Australia to the appeal which was immediately launched. All Australians responded to that appeal, not just Australians of Italian origin, and not just the Government, because the tragedy affected us all, as members of one nation.

As everybody knows, \$4.4 million was raised in the appeal, \$600,000 of it in South Australia, and it is extremely pleasing that this money is already being put to practical use and translated into valuable, concrete projects in Italy. It is particularly memorable that a kindergarten and an elderly people's home are in fact due to be opened tomorrow in the township of Campagna, and the conjunction between that event and the event we are celebrating here today will no doubt remain in many of our minds as a symbolic landmark in Australian-Italian relationships.

Funds from the earthquake appeal have also been allocated for an elderly people's home in Baronissi, and for a day hospital in Cava Dei Tirreni. Beyond that, four further projects in four other towns are being considered, and the National Committee for the Southern Italian Earthquake Appeal will in fact meet tomorrow right here at the Campania Club to decide on further allocations of appeal funds.

This club obviously played an active role in the appeal. It is not surprising that your President, Mr John Di Fede, is a distinguished member of that Committee, and I understand he will be reporting at tomorrow's meeting on progress in terms of reconstruction in Southern Italy. That report will be a matter of great interest, and if the progress in terms of reconstruction there comes anywhere near the progress in terms of construction here as represented by these new premises, then the report will be an impressive one indeed.

I understand that the Campania Club was established in 1975, and these headquarters represent a remarkable achievement on the part of the Club and its members. Nobody knows better than you that buildings such as these do not come into existence by chance; or simply through spending money. They have come into existence because a group of men and women had a vision of something worth doing, and because this vision was backed by the will and dedication to make it a reality.

The members of this club willingly joined together. I understand that many of them put their own efforts directly into the building work, and without this contribution, the facilities now enjoyed here by club members and their families would surely never have been possible. This Club is a fine example of a theme which runs through Australian history, the theme of people rising to meet a challenge, and enhancing the life of the whole community through their achievement. I have no doubt that this Club, in these premises, will make that kind of contribution.

It is not surprising in Australia in the 1980s that membership of this Club is by no means confined to Australians of Italian origin, although obviously the great majority of club members do share that particular bond. But in any case the benefits that will be gained from these new facilities will extend beyond the enjoyment of members, for through clubs such as this, Australians can reach out to other parts of the world, we can reach back to our origins and maintain our cultural inheritance, and we can reach forward to the future, to project the way of life we seek for our children. That is a goal which we all share, and a commitment we must pursue unswervingly.

I congratulate the Club for what it has achieved, and for what it will continue to do for the life of Australia. And while it is not quite time yet for me to perform the opening ceremony, I am looking forward very much to declaring these new headquarters open in a few minutes.

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