



EMBARGO UNTIL MAJOR
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AUSTRALIA DAY MESSAGE

Australia Day is an occasion for all of us to think about what Australia means to us, and the opportunities and challenges of the coming year. We can make 1983 a year of real achievement. We have the resources and the ability to succeed, but it will only be a year of achievement if we meet difficulties with a strong sense of unity, realism, and determination, and if we make the most of the opportunities this year will offer.

Provided we are realistic about the recession we can work our way through it and build a stronger and more vibrant Australia. But we cannot just sit back and wait for help from other countries. What we have to do is get out and do for ourselves the things which are really going to help Australia.

One of the most important things we must do is make sure we get full benefits of the wage pause. By itself the pause will not revitalise our economy but it is providing opportunities, and very real assistance. For example, from the savings in Commonwealth wages alone, the pause is providing \$300 million for constructive activities which will help create new jobs. \$100 million is going into welfare housing, and this will help boost employment in the building industry. \$100 million will be used specifically to help young people who are trying to get jobs, and the other \$100 million will help older unemployed people who have been displaced from the workforce. Those policies are giving help to people who really need it. Every Commonwealth public servant can see that the money which would have gone to him or her as a wage increase is now providing jobs for other Australians.

The wage pause will also provide private enterprise with an opportunity to become more profitable and more competitive, especially in overseas markets. Provided this opportunity is grasped, Australian firms will be able to grow, and create permanent new jobs. We must have a strong and profitable private sector to keep building the kind of Australia we want, for the private sector is the real source of our prosperity, and it is where most jobs come from.

There are a number of other things we need to do to improve conditions in Australia. We must demonstrate that drive and energy which has enabled Australians to win wars and overcome depression.

We must get out and obtain a bigger share of existing markets and find new markets. This means we have got to produce our goods more effectively. It means our industries and firms must take imaginative forward looking decisions. It means above all we have got to produce what people want, especially for markets overseas.

Secondly, our enterprises need to take greater advantage of new technology. Better technology will enable us to compete effectively. It will give us the ability to produce the products people want, and it will allow us to make the best use of Australia's great natural advantages.

Thirdly, we need to look closely at what governments can do, especially at a time when there is less private investment in the development of Australia. The Government has already taken action by increasing significantly spending on capital works.

We have launched the Bicentennial Road Development Programme which will greatly improve transport. We have made the decision to complete the Darwin/Alice Springs Railway in 1988, and most recently we have embarked on a major 5-year bicentennial programme to conserve and develop Australia's very scarce water supplies. We will also be funding a full investigation into whether rivers in northern NSW and Queensland could be turned inland to water our dry, sparse continent. We are resolved to test this age old dream to see if it can be turned into reality for our children. These measures will provide more jobs, they will encourage economic activity and they will provide the foundation for future development.

As we look ahead through 1983 and beyond, these are just some of the things we need to do to create the sort of Australia we all want: an Australia with rising living standards, which can provide greater security and which can create more opportunities for all Australians. But we cannot create the future we want for our children by waiting for a world economic recovery. We can't wait for the world. If world recovery does come, that will be a bonus. We have to do the job ourselves. We must get a bigger share of the action for Australia.

Every Australian has a part to play. I know people often think that what they do as individuals doesn't matter. But it matters enormously, because what we achieve as a nation is no more than the sum total of what we achieve as individuals. Australia is nothing without the contributions and the efforts of every Australian. This is why making 1983 a year of positive achievement is a task and responsibility which we all share. I have the greatest confidence that we not only can make the effort required but that we will make it.