



PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER

ENTOMBED WARRIORS EXHIBITION

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I AM DELIGHTED TO BE HERE WITH YOU TONIGHT TO OPEN IN
CANBERRA THE EXHIBITION WHICH HAS COME TO BE CALLED
'THE ENTOMBED WARRIORS'.

THIS EXHIBITION CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS AWE INSPIRING.

TO SEE IT ONE IS IMMEDIATELY TAKEN ON A JOURNEY SOME
2,200 YEARS INTO THE PAST.

IT BRINGS HOME TO US IN AUSTRALIA JUST HOW FAR BACK
CHINA'S CIVILISATION REACHES.

THIS IS THE FIRST EXHIBITION, DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO
THE QIN SHIHUANG BURIAL, TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE CHINA.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
FOR ALLOWING THESE PRICELESS NATIONAL TREASURES TO
TOUR AUSTRALIA.

THE INTEREST AND FASCINATION WHICH AUSTRALIANS HAVE
IN CHINA IS EVIDENT WHEN YOU REALISE THAT IN THE
NINE MONTHS IN WHICH THE WARRIORS HAVE BEEN IN
AUSTRALIA SOME THREE QUARTERS OF A MILLION PEOPLE,
ONE IN TWENTY AUSTRALIANS HAVE SEEN THE EXHIBITION.

IT WAS IN 1974 THAT FARMERS SEARCHING FOR WATER DISCOVERED THE SCATTERED POTTERY FRAGMENTS WHICH WERE TO SIGNIFY ONE OF THE GREAT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES OF THE CENTURY.

CONTINUOUS ACTIVITY BY ARCHAEOLOGISTS SINCE THEN HAS REVEALED A FIND OF SIZEABLE PROPORTIONS. SOME 7,000 FIGURES AND MORE THAN 100 CHARIOTS.

A SYMBOLIC ARMY BURIED ALONG WITH THE EMPEROR.

THE FIGURES THEMSELVES ARE REMARKABLE BECAUSE OF THE HIGH LEVEL OF CRAFTSMANSHIP AND THE EXCEPTIONAL ATTENTION TO DETAIL WHICH HAS GONE INTO THEIR MODELLING. THE ARTISTRY AND SKILL REVEALED IS TRULY IMPRESSIVE.

QIN SHIHUANG WAS ONE OF THE MORE NOTEWORTHY, ALBEIT CONTROVERSIAL, FIGURES IN THE HISTORY OF CHINA. WITH METHODS WHICH WERE AT TIMES NOTHING SHORT OF RUTHLESS, HE UNITED THE DIVIDED FEUDAL PROVINCES; INTRODUCED LAND REFORM; EXTENDED AND REBUILT THE GREAT WALL; STANDARDISED WEIGHTS, MEASURES, COINAGE, AND WRITING. HE WAS AN IMPORTANT EMPEROR, HIS RECORD MARRED ONLY BY SOME MISTAKES IN HIS LATER YEARS.

HE NEVERTHELESS HAD AN OBSESSIVE FEAR OF DEATH AND A PASSIONATE YEARNING FOR IMMORTALITY. IT IS IRONIC THAT SOME 2,000 YEARS LATER HE ACHIEVED IT BY ACCIDENT.

BUT IT IS THE ARTISTIC AND CREATIVE TALENTS OF THOSE ARTISANS OF ANCIENT CHINA WHICH SHOULD COMMAND OUR ATTENTION TODAY. THE SKILL AND DEDICATION THEY BROUGHT TO BEAR ARE THE SAME QUALITIES APPARENT AS THE PEOPLE OF CHINA TODAY MOVE AHEAD WITH THEIR MODERNISATION PROGRAMS.

THOSE MODERNISATION PROGRAMS AND THE EFFORT THEY INVOLVE TO PROMOTE A STRONGER, HEALTHIER CHINA, WELL-EQUIPPED TO PLAY ITS RIGHTFUL PART IN THE WORLD, WILL BE THE MARK MADE BY CHINA'S PRESENT-DAY LEADERSHIP. I AM REMINDED OF DENG ZHAOPING'S 1974 WORDS TO ZHOU ENLAI:

"OUR MISSION, UNFINISHED, MAY TAKE 1,000 YEARS. THE STRUGGLE TIRES US AND OUR HAIR IS GREY. YOU AND I, OLD FRIEND, CAN WE JUST WATCH OUR EFFORTS BEING WASTED AWAY?"

HISTORY WILL BE THE JUDGE, BUT I BELIEVE THE RECORD SPEAKS FOR ITSELF. IT IS IMPRESSIVE BY ANY STANDARDS.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OFFERED THIS EXHIBITION TO COMMEMORATE THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND CHINA. MY DISTINGUISHED PREDECESSOR GOUGH WHITLAM WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN THIS STEP.

THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WHICH WAS FORGED BY THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT WAS CONTINUED BY THE FRASER GOVERNMENT AND IS BEING FURTHER STRENGTHENED BY MY GOVERNMENT.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSOLIDATING AND EXTENDING THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND CHINA HAS BECOME ONE OF THOSE THINGS ON WHICH ALL AUSTRALIANS AGREE.

WE WERE PRIVILEGED EARLIER THIS YEAR TO RECEIVE A VISIT FROM CHINESE PREMIER ZHAO.

HIS VISIT TO OUR COUNTRY MARKED AN IMPORTANT STEP IN RELATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND CHINA AND GAVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS OUR RESPECTIVE APPROACHES TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND BILATERAL ISSUES, THE NEED FOR PEACE AND STABILITY AS A BASIS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF OUR REGION AND THE WAYS IN WHICH AUSTRALIA MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO THE MODERNISATION PROGRAM OF CHINA.

I HAVE BEEN INVITED BY THE PREMIER TO VISIT CHINA IN THE NEAR FUTURE AND HOPE TO BE ABLE TO DO SO SOON.

WE HAVE LARGE SPORTING EXCHANGES, EXCHANGES BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES, A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION PROGRAMS AND OF COURSE AN ACTIVE AND DIVERSE CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM WITH CHINA. WE ALSO HAVE A BURGEONING TRADE RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA - WE INTEND TO DEVELOP THAT TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL.

5.

I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT LATER THIS YEAR, AS PART OF THE AUSTRALIA-CHINA CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM, WE SHALL SEND TO CHINA A MAJOR COLLECTION OF AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS FROM THE PERIOD 1830's - 1930's.

THE COLLECTION WHICH IS TO BE ARRANGED BY THE AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CORPORATION INCLUDES OUTSTANDING EXAMPLES FROM AUSTRALIA'S TRADITION OF LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS AND HAS BEEN COMPILED WITH GREAT CARE FROM MAJOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS OF AUSTRALIAN ART.

THE COLLECTION FEATURES WORKS BY STREETON, ROBERTS, MCCUBBIN, REES, CONDOR AND OTHERS. IT ILLUSTRATES THE HIGHLY VARIED MOOD AND RESPONSES EVOKED AT DIFFERENT PERIODS BY AUSTRALIA'S UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT.

THE WORKS SHOW A CENTURY OF GROWTH IN AUSTRALIANS' RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR NEW LAND!

THE PAINTINGS ARE OUTSTANDING NOT ONLY AS WORKS OF ART BUT ALSO AS MILESTONES MARKING A JOURNEY INTO THE AUSTRALIAN ENVIRONMENT.

IT IS MY HOPE THAT THIS COLLECTION WILL PROVIDE AUDIENCES IN CHINA WITH AN APPRECIATION OF AUSTRALIA'S UNIQUE CULTURE AND HERITAGE. IT SHOULD ALSO STIMULATE IN ITS AUDIENCE A CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE PEOPLE AND CULTURE OF OUR COUNTRY, AS THIS MAGNIFICENT ENTOMBED WARRIORS EXHIBITION HAS DONE IN AUSTRALIA.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE ASSISTANCE OF THE CHINESE CURATORS TRAVELLING IN AUSTRALIA WITH THIS EXHIBITION. WE WELCOME MR YU JIAN OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERSEAS EXHIBITIONS CORPORATION, WHO HAS COME WITH HIS COLLEAGUES FROM BEIJIN FOR THIS OCCASION.

I ESPECIALLY WOULD LIKE TO THANK MOBIL AUSTRALIA WHOSE GENEROUS SPONSORSHIP HAS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE EXHIBITION TO BE WIDELY SEEN THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA. MOBIL'S INVOLVEMENT REPRESENTS A UNIQUELY VALUABLE FORM OF CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS IN AUSTRALIA AND MAKES A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIAN CULTURAL LIFE.

THE INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL CORPORATION WHICH WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ONEROUS TASK OF ARRANGING AND MANAGING THE EXHIBITION SHOULD BE COMPLIMENTED, AS SHOULD THE NATIONAL GALLERY AND THE OTHER GALLERIES IN THE STATES WHERE THE EXHIBITION HAS BEEN SHOWN.

7.

IT IS MY BELIEF THAT CULTURAL EXCHANGES SUCH AS THIS
PLAY A VITAL PART IN FIRMLY CEMENTING FRIENDSHIP
AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN COUNTRIES.

I HAVE GREAT PLEASURE IN DECLARING THE EXHIBITION OPEN.