

SPEECH NOTES FOR PRIME MINISTER
LAUNCHING OF THE "GREAT AUSTRALIAN ANNUAL"
SYDNEY, 3 OCTOBER, 1985

Intro.
IT IS WITH PARTICULAR PLEASURE THAT I ACCEPTED
THE INVITATION TO LAUNCH THE "GREAT AUSTRALIAN ANNUAL".

TOO RARELY WE GET OPPORTUNITIES TO REFLECT ON
WHAT IT MEANS TO BE LIVING IN AUSTRALIA AT THIS TIME IN
OUR HISTORY. EACH OF US WILL HAVE HIS OWN VIEW MOULDED
BY THE PARTICULAR QUALITY OF HIS OR HER OWN EXPERIENCE.
BUT WE ALL SHARE AN INTEREST IN, ARE PART OF, AND HAVE
CONTRIBUTED TO WHAT THIS BOOK TRIES TO CAPTURE - NAMELY
THE SPIRIT OF CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIA.

THE WORD 'GREAT' IS QUITE APTLY APPLIED TO THE
ANNUAL, IT IS STRIKING IN ITS PRESENTATION, IT MIRRORS
FAITHFULLY THE RICHNESS AND DIVERSITY OF AUSTRALIAN LIFE.
IT ALSO CAPTURES THE EXHILARATION OF OUR SUCCESSES AND THE
DEPTH OF OUR EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO DISASTER.

THIS BOOK OFFERS FASCINATING COVERAGE OF THE RICH AND THE POWERFUL, SIDE BY SIDE WITH A COMPASSIONATE SURVEY OF THE UNDERPRIVILEGED - AUSTRALIA'S LOSERS.

THIS IS MORE THAN A BOOK - IT IS AN EXPERIENCE.

THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN ANNUAL IS A RECORD OF THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE - THE 1983 EXPERIENCE OF LIVING IN AUSTRALIA AT THIS TIME IN OUR HISTORY.

HERE WE DO NOT MERELY HAVE A CONVENTIONAL COFFEE-TABLE BOOK. NOR IS IT AN ASSEMBLY OF EVENTS THAT OCCURRED IN A CERTAIN YEAR. NOR IS IT AN ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY WRITING ABOUT AUSTRALIA.

THE ANNUAL - I BELIEVE SUCCESSFULLY ^{AIMS} -/TO EXPLORE THE CONDITION OF THE NATION AND THE ATTITUDES OF ITS PEOPLE - FROM THE SUBURBANITES OF HIBISCUS AVENUE IN KARINGAL, VICTORIA, TO THE BOUNDARY RIDERS WHO PATROL THE DINGO FENCE.

READING THROUGH THE ANNUAL I WAS STRUCK BY THE CLARITY WITH WHICH IT REVEALS THE CONTINUING STATE OF TENSION WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN AUSTRALIANS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

WHATEVER ELSE 1983 REVEALED ABOUT US AS WE PLAYED OUT OUR PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE DRAMAS, IT CERTAINLY DEMONSTRATED THE FRAGILITY OF ANY ASPIRATIONS WE HAVE TO MASTER NATURE. 1983 WAS A YEAR WHEN NATURE, IN FAIRLY BRUTAL TERMS, SHOWED US WHO IS BOSS.

THE ANNUAL UNFORGETTABLY RECORDS THIS IN WORDS AND PICTURES.

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS. THIS IS CERTAINLY TRUE OF THE PICTURES GATHERED HERE. YOU WILL ALSO FIND THAT IN THIS CASE EACH THOUSAND WORDS IS WORTH - AND WORTHY OF - EACH PICTURE.

THE ANNUAL ACHIEVES A TRULY EXCITING UNITY BETWEEN THESE TWO DIVERSE FORMS OF COMMUNICATION - WORDS AND PICTURES.

THE PICTURES GRAB THE EYE, THE WORDS GRAB THE EMOTION AND TOGETHER THEY EXCITE BOTH MEMORY AND IMAGINATION.

WITH THE RESULT THAT THE ANNUAL FUNCTIONS AS A SORT OF DYNAMIC MIRROR WHICH PROVIDES NOT JUST A REFLECTION BUT A VISION OF OURSELVES IN OUR ENVIRONMENT AND IN OUR HISTORY AT THIS TIME.

IN A VERY REAL SENSE A CERTAIN UNITY IN DIVERSITY EMERGES FROM THIS ANNUAL.

IN THE SWEEP OF ITS PAGES WE CAN RE-EXPERIENCE THE DIVERSITY OF THIS GREAT LAND - ITS CLIMATE, ITS SEASONS, ITS TOWNS AND CITIES, ITS BUSHLAND, DESERTS, PLAINS AND MOUNTAINS, ITS FAUNA AND FLORA, ITS RESOURCES AND, ESPECIALLY, THE DIVERSITY OF OUR PEOPLE ... COLOUR, RACE, CREEDS, AND PURSUITS.

IN CAPTURING THE ESSENCE OF THIS AUSTRALIA OF UNIQUE CONTRASTS, THE ANNUAL ALSO MANAGES TO SUGGEST THE UNDERLYING SENSE OF UNITY WHICH EXISTS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

THIS UNITY WAS VIVIDLY REFLECTED IN THE SHARED EXCITEMENT WHICH SWEEPED THROUGH THE WHOLE CONTINENT AS WE REJOICED WITH THE CREW OF AUSTRALIA II. THEIR VICTORY WAS A SUPERB EXAMPLE OF WHAT WE AUSTRALIA ARE CAPABLE OF. THE TECHNOLOGICAL SOPHISTICATION OF OUR PRODUCT BACKED BY SKILFULL, DEDICATED AND UNTIRING EFFORT, ELICITED NEW INTERNATIONAL RESPECT FOR AUSTRALIA'S CAPABILITIES.

BUT OUR UNDERLYING SENSE OF UNITY DOES NOT SURFACE ONLY FOR GREAT SPORTING EVENTS WHICH ARE PART OF OUR UNIQUELY AUSTRALIAN LIFE STYLE.

THE TERRIBLE DIVERSITY OF DISASTER - DROUGHT, FIRE AND FLOOD - WHICH TOO FREQUENTLY FEATURES IN AUSTRALIA'S HISTORY ALSO BRINGS FORTH OUR BASIC AUSTRALIAN UNITY. THIS IS VIVIDLY BROUGHT HOME IN THE ANNUAL'S RECORD OF THE DROUGHT - THE GREAT DRY - WHICH HAD HELD VAST STRETCHES OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA IN ITS TERRIBLE GRIP FOR SEVERAL YEARS, AND THEN THE INFERNO OF ASH WEDNESDAY ...

THE NATION CAME TOGETHER -- YET AGAIN - IN A SPIRIT OF COMPASSION AND MAGNANIMOUS SUPPORT. THE CONSISTENCY WITH WHICH AUSTRALIANS HAVE ALWAYS RALLIED IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES REINFORCES MY BASIC BELIEF IN THE HUMANITY AND ULTIMATE GENEROSITY OF OUR PEOPLE.

MANY OF THE QUIRKS OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHARACTER ALSO ARE REVEALED IN THESE PAGES.

EVEN IN THE MIDST OF CALAMITY WE CAN AT TIMES DISCOVER IN OURSELVES A WRY SORT OF 'GALLLOWS HUMOUR'; YOU ALL KNOW THE STORY ABOUT THE FARMER WHO AFTER MONTHS OF DROUGHT FAINTED FROM SHOCK WHEN A DROP OF RAIN FELL ON HIM - HIS MATE HAD TO THROW THREE BUCKETS OF DUST IN HIS FACE TO REVIVE HIM.

HUMOUR HAS ITS UNIFYING EFFECT. SO TOO DOES OUR SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE, OUR WILLINGNESS TO 'HAVE A GO', OUR SENSE OF FAIR PLAY AND OUR OPTIMISM AND FAITH IN DETERMINING OUR FUTURE.

THESE ARE WHAT THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN ANNUAL IS ABOUT.

THESE ALSO HAPPEN TO BE WHAT THIS GOVERNMENT IS ABOUT.

ENCOURAGING THESE UNIFYING ASPECTS OF OUR DIVERSE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY BY FIRST FACING REALITY, THEN

- UTILISING CONSENSUS RATHER THAN CONFLICT
- SEEKING CO-OPERATION RATHER THAN CONFRONTATION
- AND HARNESSING THE RICH RESOURCES OF OUR COUNTRY
AND OUR CHARACTER

UNDERPINS EVERY EFFORT OF THE GOVERNMENT.

ALL THIS TO ACHIEVE A BETTER AUSTRALIA FOR ALL
AUSTRALIANS - NOT JUST FOR A PRIVILEGED FEW.

BUT I AM NOT LAUNCHING A CAMPAIGN; I AM LAUNCHING
THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN ANNUAL - SO LET ME NOW PAY
TRIBUTE TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED THEIR
TALENTS AND TIME TO ACHIEVING WHAT IS ONE OF THE
LARGEST AND MOST SIGNIFICANT PUBLISHING EVENTS IN THE
LAST DECADE.

THE EXCITING CONCEPT OF A ONCE-A-YEAR BOOK TO BE KNOWN
AS THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN ANNUAL WAS THE IDEA OF BOTH
KEVIN WELDON AND MAX SUICH.

AS KEVIN HAS SINCE EXPLAINED TO ME, HE WANTED TO PRODUCE
AUSTRALIA'S OWN ANNUAL; A BOOK AS LARGE IN SCOPE AND
AS UNIQUE AS OUR GREAT COUNTRY; A BOOK WHICH WOULD
HELP BRING THIS COUNTRY TOGETHER.

IN THIS GREAT TASK KEVIN AND MAX, WHO HAVE WORKED ON THIS
FOR OVER TWO YEARS, WERE JOINED BY EDITORS-IN-CHIEF
OF FIVE MAJOR DAILY NEWSPAPERS

- THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD
- THE AGE

- THE ADELAIDE ADVERTISER
- THE WEST AUSTRALIAN
- THE COURIER MAIL

THEIR INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION IS REFLECTED AT EVERY POINT IN THIS ENTERPRISE.

AS WELL THE TALENTS AND ENTHUSIASM OF OVER 100 OF AUSTRALIA'S LEADING PHOTO JOURNALISTS AND FREELANCE PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE APPLIED TO PRODUCE THE STUNNING PICTORIAL ACCOUNT OF A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF AUSTRALIA.

THERE ARE ALSO THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OVER 150 OF AUSTRALIA'S LEADING WRITERS, TOGETHER WITH SKILLED DESIGNERS AND TYPESETTERS.

I AM CERTAIN THAT, WHEN YOU EXAMINE THIS GREAT AUSTRALIAN ANNUAL FOR YOURSELVES, YOU WILL AGREE WITH ME THAT IT IS A MAGNIFICENT REALISATION OF THE ORIGINAL CONCEPT AND THAT IT HAS BEEN DONE FULL JUSTICE BY ALL THOSE WHO ASSISTED IN PRODUCING IT.

I AM EQUALLY CERTAIN THAT YOU WILL BE LOOKING FORWARD AS EAGERLY AS I AM TO THE ANNUALS WHICH WILL FOLLOW.

FINALLY, MAY I THANK KEVIN WELDON, MAX SUICH AND ALL WHO SHARED IN THIS INSPIRING ACHIEVEMENT AND RECOMMEND THEIR WORK TO ALL AUSTRALIANS.
