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PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON R.J. HAWKE AC, MP
TO THE QUEENSLAND STATE COUNCIL

BRISBANE

3 MARCH 1984

DELEGATES,

IT IS JUST ONE YEAR AGO - MONDAY, TO BE EXACT -
THAT THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE MADE THEIR HISTORIC DECISION
AND PUT LABOR IN CHARGE OF THE AFFAIRS OF THIS NATION.

THE QUEENSLAND CONTRIBUTION TO THAT RESULT
WAS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT.

QUEENSLAND GAVE US PROPORTIONATELY THE SECOND
HIGHEST GAINS IN AUSTRALIA - AFTER WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

WE DOUBLED OUR REPRESENTATION IN THIS STATE -
FROM FIVE TO TEN.

AND WE RETURNED TO THE POSITION - ALL TOO RARE
DURING THE PAST THIRTY-FIVE YEARS - WHEREBY LABOR NOW HOLDS
A MAJORITY OF QUEENSLAND'S NINETEEN FEDERAL SEATS.

THAT IS QUEENSLAND'S ANSWER TO THOSE WHO WOULD
HAVE YOU BELIEVE THAT QUEENSLAND IS DIFFERENT - THAT
QUEENSLAND IS ANTI-LABOR, THAT QUEENSLAND IS THE DOMAIN
OF CONSERVATISM AND REACTION IN AUSTRALIA.

AND IT'S THE ONLY ANSWER THAT MATTERS -
THE ANSWER OF THE PEOPLE OF QUEENSLAND.

THE FACT IS, DELEGATES, THAT THE ONLY THING THE
PEOPLE OF QUEENSLAND NEED TO SHOW THE STRENGTH OF THEIR
SUPPORT FOR LABOR IS A FAIR REDISTRIBUTION AND AN HONEST
ELECTORAL SYSTEM.

AND IT WAS THE REFUSAL OF THE LIBERALS IN THIS
STATE TO GIVE THE PEOPLE THE CHANCE OF A DECENT,
HONEST, FAIR SYSTEM WHICH LED TO THEIR DEVASTATION
LAST OCTOBER.

DELEGATES, WHAT HAPPENED ON THE FIFTH OF
MARCH 1983 WAS MORE THAN A LABOR VICTORY: IT WAS
A WATERSHED IN OUR HISTORY. WE HAVE SET THIS NATION ON
A PATH OF CHANGE, REFORM AND RECONSTRUCTION WHICH WILL
DETERMINE THE SHAPE OF AUSTRALIA FOR THE REST OF THIS
CENTURY AND BEYOND.

AND I BELIEVE WE CAN SAY - AS A GOVERNMENT AND
AS A PARTY - THAT NO GOVERNMENT IN THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA
HAS MOVED SO PROMPTLY AND EFFECTIVELY TO HONOUR THE
UNDERTAKINGS WE GAVE TO THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA JUST
ONE YEAR AGO.

AND DELEGATES TO THIS REPRESENTATIVE GATHERING OF LABOR MEN AND WOMEN - THE OFFICERS, BRANCH OFFICIALS AND RANK AND FILE MEMBERS WHO WORKED SO HARD TO ACHIEVE THAT VICTORY, YOU KNOW THAT THE EFFORTS OUR GOVERNMENT - YOUR GOVERNMENT - HAS MADE OVER THE PAST YEAR HAVE BEEN DIRECTED UNSWERVINGLY TOWARDS THE FULFILMENT OF THE POLICIES, PROGRAM, PLATFORM AND PRINCIPLES OF THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY.

EVERYTHING WE HAVE DONE HAS REFLECTED OUR ABSOLUTE COMMITMENT TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF LABOR'S CAUSE.

DELEGATES, WHEN YOU REMEMBER OUR INHERITANCE OF SEVEN YEARS OF FRASER AND FRASERISM, WHEN YOU REMEMBER THE MAGNITUDE OF THE ECONOMIC CRISIS CONFRONTING AUSTRALIA ONLY A YEAR AGO, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY EASY FOR US TO CONCENTRATE SIMPLY ON THE IMMEDIATE TASK IN HAND - THAT FIRST TASK FOR WHICH WE WERE ELECTED, THE TASK OF CLEANING UP THE ECONOMIC MESS THE CONSERVATIVES LEFT US.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASY TO USE THE ALIBI OF THE RECESSION - THE WORST FOR FIFTY YEARS - AS AN EXCUSE FOR PUTTING THE REST OF THE LABOR PROGRAM AND THE WORK OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, ELECTORAL AND LEGAL REFORM ON THE BACK BURNER.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASY TO USE THE MASSIVE INHERITED DEFICIT - THE CONCEALED \$9.6 BILLION - AS AN EXCUSE TO DEFER INDEFINITELY LABOR'S PROGRAM FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REFORM.

BUT THAT HAS NOT BEEN OUR WAY. IT IS NOT MY WAY. AND IT IS NOT THE LABOR WAY.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE AND WHAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO IS TO WORK FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LABOR PROGRAM, SIDE BY SIDE.

AND OF COURSE DELEGATES, THEY ARE INTERLOCKING OBJECTIVES.

THE ULTIMATE FULFILMENT OF OUR UNDERTAKINGS TO THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA MUST DEPEND ON THE RESTORATION OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND A SUSTAINED RECOVERY WITH STRONG GROWTH IN EMPLOYMENT, WITHOUT A NEW ROUND OF SELF-DEFEATING INFLATION.

SO WE HAVE GIVEN TOP PRIORITY TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY AS THE PRECONDITION FOR THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LABOR PROGRAM.

BUT AGAIN, I EMPHASISE THAT, TO THE LIMIT OF OUR RESOURCES, AND WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED ON US BY THE LIBERAL LEGACY, WE HAVE MOVED SIMULTANEOUSLY, PROMPTLY AND PROGRESSIVELY, TO FULFIL THE UNDERTAKINGS ON WHICH WE WERE ELECTED.

THE RESULT HAS BEEN A RECORD OF PERFORMANCE OF ELECTION PROMISES THAT NO PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT HAS MATCHED IN THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA.

ALTHOUGH OUR PROPOSALS WERE PRESENTED AS A PROGRAM FOR OUR FIRST PARLIAMENTARY TERM, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY - NEARLY 90 PERCENT OF THEM - HAVE BEEN HONOURED IN FULL OR SET IN TRAIN BY THE END OF OUR FIRST YEAR.

AND DELEGATES, JUST AS IMPORTANT AS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIFIC PROMISES, IS THE APPROACH, THE SPIRIT, THE PHILOSOPHY WHICH WE HAVE BROUGHT TO THE WORK AS A WHOLE.

AND THAT APPROACH, THAT SPIRIT, THAT PHILOSOPHY, HAS BEEN UNIQUELY AND AUTHENTICALLY THE LABOR APPROACH, THE LABOR SPIRIT, THE LABOR PHILOSOPHY, THE LABOR WAY.

AND FUNDAMENTAL TO EVERYTHING WE HAVE DONE HAS BEEN THE EFFORT TO BRING AUSTRALIANS TOGETHER AND TO REPLACE CONFRONTATION WITH CO-OPERATION.

AND THAT IDEA - THE IDEA OF THE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY - LIES AT THE VERY HEART OF THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE LABOR PARTY AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT. THAT IS THE TRUE MEANING OF "THE LIGHT ON THE HILL".

WHAT WE HAVE TRIED TO DO IS TO
TRANSLATE THAT LABOR IDEAL - THE IDEAL OF THE TRULY
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY - INTO PRACTICAL TERMS.

AND NOWHERE IS THIS UNIQUELY LABOR APPROACH
BETTER ILLUSTRATED THAN IN THE AREA OF ECONOMIC
POLICY.

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE
AND ALL THAT FLOWED FROM IT, THE PRICES AND INCOMES ACCORD,
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ECONOMIC PLANNING ADVISORY
COUNCIL, WAGE INDEXATION WITH ALL ITS SIGNIFICANCE
FOR THE FUTURE OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN THIS
COUNTRY - ALL THESE TOUCH AT EVERY POINT UPON THE
CENTRAL LABOR IDEAL OF THE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY,
THE BUILDING OF A COMMUNITY IN WHICH ALL SECTIONS AND
INTERESTS RECOGNISE THEIR INTERDEPENDENCE.

IT IS TRUE THAT EACH OF THE MEASURES JUST
MENTIONED, AND THE REST OF OUR ECONOMIC DECISIONS,
WERE MADE IN THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT OF THE MASSIVE ECONOMIC
CRISIS WE INHERITED. BUT THERE IS NOTHING AD HOC
ABOUT THEM. THEY FORM PART OF A CONSISTENT AND
COHERENT POLICY. AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR THIS NATION,
IN THE WAY WE WORK TOGETHER, AND BUILD TOGETHER, WILL
ENDURE LONG AFTER THEIR INITIAL PURPOSE HAS BEEN SERVED
AND WE HAVE FINALLY CLEANED UP THE ECONOMIC MESS WE
INHERITED A YEAR AGO.

DELEGATES, I SAID BEFORE THAT NEARLY NINETY PERCENT OF THE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THE POLICY SPEECH LAST YEAR HAVE ALREADY BEEN CARRIED OUT IN FULL OR IN PART.

BUT THE POLICY SPEECH I PRESENTED ON BEHALF OF THE PARTY A YEAR AGO WAS NOT JUST SOME SHOPPING LIST OF ELECTION PROMISES DRUMMED UP OVERNIGHT FOR THE CAMPAIGN. IT WAS NOT PRODUCED IN A VACUUM. IT BROUGHT TOGETHER THE MONTHS AND YEARS OF WORK BY THE COMMITTEES, COUNCILS AND CONFERENCES OF OUR PARTY.

THAT WORK FINDS PARTICULAR EXPRESSION IN THE PLATFORM.

AND JUST AS WE HAVE AN UNPARALLELED RECORD OF PERFORMANCE IN HONOURING OUR ELECTION UNDERTAKINGS, THIS LABOR GOVERNMENT, IN ITS FIRST YEAR, HAS DONE MORE THAN ANY PREVIOUS FEDERAL LABOR GOVERNMENT IN A COMPARABLE PERIOD TO GIVE EFFECT TO LABOR POLICIES.

ANY EXAMINATION OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS, VIEWED AGAINST THE PERSPECTIVE EITHER OF THE POLICY SPEECH OR THE PLATFORM FROM WHICH IT SPRANG, WILL AMPLY DEMONSTRATE THIS.

IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD, THE PRIMACY THE PLATFORM GIVES TO ECONOMIC PLANNING, TO ECONOMIC GROWTH, TO EXPANDED CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMS, TO INCREASED ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO HOUSING, TO WAGE INDEXATION, TO PRICE SURVEILLANCE, TO THE ERADICATION OF TAX AVOIDANCE, TO FAIRNESS AND EQUITY IN RELATIONS WITH THE STATES AND BETWEEN THE STATES, TO MORE EFFECTIVE AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUSTRALIA'S INDUSTRIES AND RESOURCES - ALL THIS AND MORE IS FAITHFULLY REFLECTED IN OUR GOVERNMENT'S PRIORITIES AND OUR GOVERNMENT'S DECISIONS.

WE HAVE GIVEN PARTICULAR PRIORITY TO EXPANDING EMPLOYMENT AND REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT. SINCE THE SUMMIT LAST APRIL, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED EMPLOYMENT HAS EXPANDED BY OVER 2 PERCENT - BY MORE THAN 130,000 JOBS - AND UNEMPLOYMENT HAS BEEN CUT FROM 10.3 PERCENT TO 9.5 PERCENT. WE HAVE THEREFORE ALREADY GONE A GOOD WAY TOWARDS REALISING OUR ELECTION COMMITMENT TO SEE 500,000 NEW JOBS CREATED IN OUR FIRST THREE YEARS IN OFFICE. INDEED WE ARE AHEAD OF THE RATE REQUIRED TO MEET THAT TARGET.

IN SOCIAL WELFARE, IN HEALTH, IN EDUCATION, TREMENDOUS STRIDES HAVE BEEN TAKEN TOWARDS THE FULFILMENT OF THE PLATFORM.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO MOVE TO BRING THE BASIC PENSION RATE TO A MORE SATISFACTORY LEVEL.

WE HAVE INDEXED PENSIONER FRINGE BENEFITS.

WE HAVE INCREASED THE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT FOR SINGLE ADULTS BY OVER 20 PERCENT.

WE HAVE INCREASED ASSISTANCE FOR THE CHILDREN OF PENSIONERS BY 20 PERCENT.

MEDICARE IS NOW AN ESTABLISHED FACT, AND I SAY WITH ABSOLUTE CONVICTION THAT THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA - NOT LEAST THE PEOPLE OF QUEENSLAND WHO WILL BENEFIT SO MUCH FROM IT - WILL NEVER AGAIN PERMIT IT TO BE DISMANTLED OR SABOTAGED.

WE HAVE BOOSTED EDUCATION FUNDING AND REDIRECTED FUNDS ON THE BASIS OF NEED. IN THE PROCESS, WE HAVE REDISTRIBUTED FUNDS TOWARDS GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS AND THE GREAT MAJORITY OF NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS WHOSE NEEDS ARE GREATEST.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO ACHIEVING THE PARTY'S BASIC OBJECTIVE OF PROVIDING EQUALITY OF EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN.

AND, DELEGATES, IN THAT NOBLE WORD "EQUALITY" - GENUINE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS - YOU HAVE THE VERY TOUCHSTONE OF OUR PARTY'S PHILOSOPHY.

WE HAVE MOVED RAPIDLY TO PROMOTE REAL EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY REGARDLESS OF SEX, RACE, OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND.

WE HAVE INTRODUCED THE PATHBREAKING SEX DISCRIMINATION BILL; IT HAS ALREADY PASSED THE SENATE AND IS NOW BEING CONSIDERED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WE HAVE RATIFIED THE KEY UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN.

WE HAVE REINSTATED THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S EMERGENCY SERVICES PROGRAM TO CO-ORDINATE EMERGENCY SERVICES FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN ESCAPING INTOLERABLE DOMESTIC SITUATIONS.

WE HAVE APPOINTED MORE THAN FIFTY WOMEN TO IMPORTANT STATUTORY POSITIONS WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES SUCH AS THE ABC, THE TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION AND EPAC.

WE WILL SHORTLY ISSUE A GREEN PAPER SETTING OUT OUR PLANS FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR WOMEN.

WE BOOSTED COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR ABORIGINAL PROGRAMS BY 28 PERCENT THIS FINANCIAL YEAR AND MADE AVAILABLE A FURTHER \$130 MILLION FROM OTHER COMMONWEALTH SOURCES.

WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A WORKING PARTY TO EXAMINE REQUIREMENTS FOR A UNIFORM COMMONWEALTH APPROACH TO ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS.

OUR HISTORIC DECISIONS TO GRANT LAND TITLE TO AYERS ROCK AND MT OLGA TO THE TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL OWNERS SHOWS OUR WILLINGNESS TO RECOGNISE THE JUST AND LEGITIMATE CLAIMS OF A PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN DISPOSSESSED OF THEIR LAND.

WE HAVE PROVIDED 60 ADDITIONAL GRANTS TO ETHNIC AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY AGENCIES HAVING EXTENSIVE CONTACT WITH MIGRANTS TO IMPROVE THE ACCESS OF MIGRANT TO WELFARE SERVICES.

WE HAVE BOOSTED FUNDING FOR THE ADULT MIGRANT EDUCATION SERVICE TO IMPROVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS.

WE HAVE APPOINTED A MIGRANT WOMEN CO-ORDINATOR TO DEAL WITH THE SPECIAL NEEDS OF MIGRANT WOMEN.

WE ARE STRENGTHENING THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.

WE ARE STRENGTHENING THE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ACT TO MAKE IT A MORE EFFECTIVE WEAPON FOR FIGHTING RACIAL DISCRIMINATION.

AT LAST, AUSTRALIA HAS A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT DETERMINED TO CARRY OUT ITS CONSTITUTIONAL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITIES TO OUR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE.

DELEGATES, WE CAN GO THROUGH THE PLATFORM VIRTUALLY PAGE BY PAGE AND SEE A RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT NOT EXCELLED IN THE HISTORY OF LABOR GOVERNMENTS OF AUSTRALIA. INDEED, I REQUESTED MY DEPARTMENT TO DO JUST THAT, AND THE DOCUMENT THEY HAVE PROVIDED AMOUNTS TO A MASSIVE CONFIRMATION OF A RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT OF WHICH I BELIEVE EVERY MEMBER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY THROUGHOUT THIS NATION CAN BE JUSTLY PROUD - PROUD OF OUR ACHIEVEMENT, PROUD OF OUR PARTY, PROUD OF OUR GOVERNMENT.

BUT I BELIEVE THAT WHAT WE CAN BE PROUDEST OF ALL ABOUT, IS THE WAY THAT THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE HAVE RESPONDED TO OUR WORK ON THEIR BEHALF.

THEY HAVE SHOWN THAT GIVEN LEADERSHIP FROM LABOR, WE CAN WORK TOGETHER, WE CAN REDUCE CONFRONTATION, WE CAN RESOLVE CONFLICT. WE CAN CO-OPERATE WITH EACH OTHER TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE.

IN PARTICULAR, THE RESPONSE OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT HAS BEEN OF TREMENDOUS ENCOURAGEMENT AND IS TREMENDOUSLY SIGNIFICANT FOR THE FUTURE.

INDUSTRIAL DISPUTATION IN THE PAST YEAR HAS BEEN AT QUITE HISTORICALLY LOW LEVELS.

THERE HAS BEEN A GENUINE EXERCISE OF RESTRAINT.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THAT SPIRIT CONTINUES IF THE RECOVERY IS TO BE FULLY ACHIEVED AND SUSTAINED.

AND ONLY IF THAT HAPPENS, WILL WE BE ABLE TO CONTINUE OUR WORK OF CARRYING OUT THE PROGRAM AND PLATFORM OF THE PARTY TO ITS COMPLETION.

FOR THE FIRST TIME FOR AS LONG AS MOST OF US CAN REMEMBER, AUSTRALIA NOW HAS A REAL CHANCE OF PUTTING BEHIND US THE NEEDLESS DIVISIONS AND CONFRONTATIONS THAT HAVE IMPEDED OUR PROGRESS, MARRED OUR SOCIETY AND REDUCED OUR STANDING IN THE WORLD, PARTICULARLY IN THE LAST DECADE.

THIS IS A CHANCE, A CHANCE FOR NATIONAL RECOVERY, NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION, WHICH MUST NOT BE THROWN AWAY.

IN PARTICULAR, DELEGATES, THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE MUST RESOLUTELY OPPOSE THE EFFORTS OF THOSE FEW WHO SEEK, FOR THEIR OWN ENDS, TO UNDERMINE CONFIDENCE IN OUR DEMOCRATIC, INDUSTRIAL, POLITICAL, LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

THIS WEEK THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT WAS DISGRACED BY A SQUALID ATTEMPT TO BESMIRCH THE ENTIRE JUDICIAL SYSTEM IN THIS NATION.

IT IS NO COINCIDENCE, DELEGATES, THAT THIS ATTEMPT TO UNDERMINE CONFIDENCE IN OUR INSTITUTIONS COMES AT A TIME OF HISTORIC ASCENDANCY OF OUR PARTY - AT A TIME WHEN, BY OUR SCRUPULOUS ADHERENCE TO THE PRINCIPLES AND THE SYSTEM OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY, WE HAVE WON THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, THE GOVERNMENTS OF FOUR STATES, AND ARE WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE OF GOVERNMENT IN QUEENSLAND.

THE PEOPLE, EXPRESSING THEMSELVES THROUGH THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM, HAVE DECISIVELY REJECTED OUR CONSERVATIVE OPPONENTS THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA.

AND IN THEIR DESPAIR AND BITTERNESS, SOME ELEMENTS AMONG THESE SO-CALLED CONSERVATIVES ARE PREPARED TO SABOTAGE THE SYSTEM ITSELF AND THE INSTITUTIONS ON WHICH IT IS BASED.

DELEGATES, I AM CONFIDENT THE PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA WILL REJECT WITH CONTEMPT THE DISGRACEFUL TACTICS OF THESE DISCREDITED PEOPLE.

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IT IS SIMPLY AN ATTEMPT TO REVIVE THE POLITICS OF DIVISION, THE POLITICS OF SUSPICION, THE POLITICS OF CONFRONTATION IN A DIFFERENT, AND EVEN MORE DAMAGING, FORM.

AND JUST AS THE PEOPLE REJECTED THOSE POLITICS SO DECISIVELY A YEAR AGO, SO WILL THEY REJECT THEM NOW AND IN THE YEARS TO COME - YEARS, DELEGATES, THAT WITH YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT AND THE SUPPORT OF YOUR FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE PARTY THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA, WILL BE GREAT YEARS FOR OUR GOVERNMENT, OUR PARTY, AND OUR NATION.
