



## PRIME MINISTER

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ADDRESS TO MYER SEMINAR, MELBOURNE, 5 SEPTEMBER

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Ladies and Gentlemen, Young People ...,

It was with particular pleasure that I was able to accept your invitation to attend this Seminar.

International Youth Year is a very important year for Australia as a nation, and its young people in particular.

After the most careful process of consultation and planning we as a Government have put together a strategy - Priority One - that will improve and integrate our many policies and programs for young people. It is a strategy that makes an unprecedented assault on the problems and needs of our young people.

In my address to the nation on 18 August, and in the Government's Budget for 1985/86, we have outlined the main components of that strategy. I pointed out that the solutions we are seeking are not simple, cheap, easy or swift and will need the full cooperation of all Australians. Especially, we will be relying on the cooperative effort of employers, unions and active community groups everywhere in the country.

The initiative taken by Myers Stores and Target in running this seminar program, is precisely the kind of responsive attitude we need from the business sector.

At the heart of the Government's strategy is a determination to see our young people properly qualified for the work force. We want to see as many of our young people as possible employed.

If our young people are to get jobs, they should be properly trained and equipped for the work force.

Our schools do a good job in educating young people, but for some young people different or additional training is needed.

Most young people about to leave school are handicapped by a lack of knowledge and familiarity with the labour market. At least 100,000 young Australian school leavers enter the labour market each year with no further systematic vocational training. It is both in their interests and the wider community interest that some bridging mechanism be found.

The Government's response to this pressing need is to institute a traineeship scheme. You will know from my address to the nation that we are aiming to have 10,000 traineeships created in 1985/86 so that young 16 and 17 year old school-leavers can benefit from a combination of vocational training and work.

By 1988 we will be looking to that 10,000 traineeships becoming 75,000 traineeships per year.

The fact that 2,500 young people have participated in these seminars - seminars organised to explain job opportunities available to young people, to guide them in the best way of applying for a job and to provide some work experience - is proof positive that young people are eager to acquire the sorts of vocational skills that will help them make the successful leap from the world of schooling and dependency, to the world of work and independent responsibility.

You will not need me to tell you that the success of the traineeship scheme the Government has now proposed will depend heavily upon the willingness of employers to take advantage of the incentives being offered by the Commonwealth, as well as on the TAFE system to provide the off-the-job training that will be an essential element of the program. Their cooperation, and that of the unions directly concerned is crucial.

Areas of the labour market that we have already identified as likely environments for traineeships are the tourism and hospitality industry, the banking and finance industry and the retail industry. We hope to see early progress in these areas.

The retail industry, with its 93,000 establishments across Australia, and another 27,000 establishments in the motor vehicle and accessories sector, is the largest single private sector employer in Australia, employing about one million people. And there are within this industry many companies large and small, of similar goodwill and concern for young people as the Myer Stores and Target. These will be among the forerunners in offering traineeships to young people like yourselves in both the immediate and long-term future.

Young people themselves will not be the only ones to benefit from the training and valuable experience that traineeships will offer, but industry too will benefit from the better equipped and more adaptable workforce that will result.

The traineeship scheme is, of course, only one part of the total package of reforms and provisions that we have adopted as our strategy for young people. It is nevertheless the most immediate and relevant part for those of you who are here today.

Indeed I should like to offer my strongest endorsement for this approach by Myers Stores and Target, to congratulate those of you who have put in your best efforts to make the retail industry more efficient and effective, and to offer my best wishes to all young people who next year or in the near future will be leaving school and putting their skills to work in the labour force.

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