



PRIME MINISTER

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PRIME MINISTER'S RESPONSE TO THE MAYORAL WELCOME
AT THE CITY OF BATHURST,
21 SEPTEMBER 1985

Mr Mayor, Distinguished Guests, my colleague, David Simmons, Member for Calare, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I thank you for your welcoming comments Mr Mayor. I am most pleased to be here in Australia's oldest inland city (founded in 1815) for the celebrations of the Ben Chifley Centenary. It is indeed a great day.

Ben Chifley needs no introduction to you. He was a great Prime Minister. He was a great Prime Minister who loved this country, and his roots lie here in Bathurst - a town which he loved, admired and worked for during his career in private and public office.

It is with deep pride I am able to say that the warm welcome I have received today as a Labor Prime Minister stems from the memories that many of your townfolk have of Ben Chifley, particularly when he was Prime Minister.

Ben Chifley, as you all know, was a great Australian Prime Minister. He lived for politics. He was a deep, empirical and reflective man who understood the significance of leading Australia at a time of crisis in our country.

Ben Chifley, was first and last a Bathurst man and felt himself to be a citizen of no mean city. His father was born here before him and he himself knew no home outside the Bathurst district. "No Chifley," he used to say, "ever left Bathurst, except feet first." Though he died in Canberra he was flown home for burial amongst his family and townfolk.

Bathurst was the lifelong background of his career, as it was the constant focus of his heart. He would often say, "I was a child of the pavements, a boy from the bush." He was interested in your history, refreshed by its beauty amongst the rolling plains and proud and solicitous of your civic progress. He would also be proud today to know that a nephew, John Chifley, is a member of your local council.

In closing may I say how wonderful it is to be away from Canberra and tremendous to be here in Bathurst. I only wish I could make these sorts of trips on more and more occasions. Thank you for your hospitality and I congratulate you on your organisation for this celebration. I wish you and your great city well today and into the future.
