



PRIME MINISTER

E. & O.E. - PROOF ONLY

SPEECH BY PRIME MINISTER
WARWICK COMMUNITY DINNER
WARWICK - 25 SEPTEMBER 1985

Marianne Beddall, David Beddall, Stan Walsh and Members of the Queensland Parliament.

Thank you very much for being here and may I say while I am talking about Members of Parliament from the other side of politics, I do appreciate you being here. I am also very pleased to be able to say that an ex-Federal Member of Parliament, again from the other side of the fence, Syd Barnes, who was the Minister for Territories and who I knew very well has sent his apologies and said he would very much like to have been here. And may I say in welcoming those distinguished guests, in particular, and you ladies and gentlemen, that one of the reasons I am so very pleased to be here with you tonight in Warwick is that I know that this is a very mixed audience and there is a great number of people here who have been loyal and steadfast members and supporters of my Party, the Labor Party. But there are also many here who are of the other side of politics. I thank you particularly for being here and I think it is a characteristic of our great Australian society, particularly of non-metropolitan Australia, that we can have a gathering such as this and I do thank you very much for all being here.

Talking about people who have been active in politics, I wonder if Andy Young said for those of you who have not been active and involved in the Labor Party, if I did, however, pay a particular tribute to two members of the Party who are here tonight who have given an enormous number of years and service, almost a hundred years of service between them to the Party. I refer to Eddie Moyle and Don Mulcahy. I thank them because all political parties in this country depend

upon loyal hard working members and I have had the opportunity of meeting both them. And on behalf of our great Party I do thank you for those years of service. And may I also in talking about individuals also say thank you to Phil Doyle for the pleasure of your company here Phil and to say how pleased we are that you have recovered from a very serious operation. It is your first night out. I don't know that your cardiologist would approve of the diet that you had tonight. You had a lot to eat but that also leads me, if I could, to say thank you to the ladies out there. I have seen a lot of big functions where there are hundreds of people present. Catering for such a big mob is very very difficult but I can honestly say I have never sat down in such a big gathering where the meal put in front of me seems as though it has been personally prepared. Thank you very much indeed.

Now could I give those you who haven't yet heard a good piece of news. David Beddall has been on my back and on the back of the Government for a long time and properly on our back about the needs of this area of Warwick and he said that you really should have a TAFE here. So earlier this year we set aside half a million dollars for definition work and following that the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission has recommended to the Government that we should make a decision to go ahead with the TAFE College here. That hasn't yet gone to Cabinet but if you are Prime Minister and you can't make a couple of decisions yourself it's not worth being in the job. So I announce that when that recommendation comes to Cabinet it will be approved in 1986. There will be half a million dollars immediately in 1986 to commence the construction of your TAFE College and the whole amount of \$6.8 million will be made available so that you will have your TAFE College in Warwick.

Now I know, my friends, that here in the audience tonight there are people from a wide range of occupations. There are those of you who are employed in factories and there are those of you who work on your own farms. There are people who have retired. There are young people. You have different ways of earning your occupation but there is one thing which joins us all together. Whatever our occupation, whatever our occupation is going to be or whatever we have done now or in retirement and that is, I believe, the love of this country and the hope and the expectation that we are going to be able, as Australians, to develop the resources of our country in a way which will mean whatever our occupation we are going to be able to get fair go. We are gradually going to be able to have the opportunity of a better standard of living and as well as those of us who are in occupations that we will also as a nation properly be able to show compassion to those in our society who through no fault of their own, either because they are now elderly or they are disabled, or through reasons beyond their own fault are unemployed, we share, I believe, a commitment and a compassion that as we develop as a society

we will do the right thing by those who need the community as a whole.

Therefore, if I can tonight, Ladies and Gentlemen, to talk with you about our shared aspirations and hopes. Because I know that it is a mixed audience, I will not attempt to make a stark part of this speech, although I know that you will understand that if I am talking about what I believe we have been able to achieve since I have had the great honour and responsibility of being Prime Minister of this country, I will be talking about our achievements. I will be talking, however, in terms which I hope all of you will be able to identify with. Not only in terms of what's happened in the recent past but I hope that you will be able to share with me my vision of what this great country is going to be.

Let me talk, therefore, first a little bit about our recent history and what we have tried to do to bring this great country of ours which we all love up into the forefront of the nations of the world.

It is the case and I don't want to go into the details of the past, but it was the case you know that when we came to office in the beginning of 1983 that our country was in poor shape. We had high rising unemployment, high inflation. It wasn't a country that was pulling together and working together. There was too much conflict in this country and I have had a great hope for many years before I got into the Parliament that we as Australians could do better.

I looked at this country of ours and I saw a country which I believed almost any other country in the world would pleased to exchange places with. What country in the world could match Australia in terms of the resources we have got.

Think about it. A vast country, a vast island continent with every imaginable resource that you can think of. Land itself, almost in a sense unlimited land, great resources of mineral wealth beneath our land, vast oceans around us filled with marine life and we have a people well trained, a people of whom the tactic and concept of terrorism is alien. A country within which the concepts of parliamentary democracy were well routed.

Now you see if you think of that, very few countries in the world could match what we have. And it was a matter of great disappointment to me as I looked at this country before I went into the Parliament and I had the responsibility of one our great institutions to work not only for the working men and women but to work with business and with governments. It was a matter of great regret to me that we didn't seem to have together been sensible enough to realise just how magnificent those resources were and what we could do with them. And so I made a pledge to the people of Australia when

I was given the honour of leading my Party in the beginning of 1983. I made a pledge to the people of Australia that we would try in government to bring the people of Australia together to try and see what we could do to end the conflict that we had experienced, the antagonisms that we had practiced one upon the other. And neither side in industry was blameless in that. And to see whether instead of being a country which had ceased to grow except in terms of growing unemployment and rising inflation, to see whether we couldn't together turn that around.

And so you will recall as Australians through our great organisations we came together in April of 1983 for the Summit. And I asked you and Australians through your organisations to join with us in trying to turn the country around.

I said then because I believe that to be true as I do now that no government, certainly my government, we don't have the monopoly of wisdom. I believe that we had good quality, good ideas but we certainly didn't know everything and so we asked you the people of Australia through your organisations to join with us, pool our ideas and then set about the task of reconciliation, reconstruction and recovery.

On the occasion of that Summit we talked together and then we together went about our business. As a matter of pride to me to be able to come out into a place like Warwick in non-metropolitan Australia where you have such a cross section of Australians. It is a great pleasure and a matter of pride to me to be able to come to you now after two and a half years and say to you that together, not just government, but to say that together as Australians we have done it.

Let me, without burdening you with a great list of statistics, tell you what you have done. What we have done together. Where we had zero growth at the beginning of 1983 we have now had two years of growth of 5% in GDP. We now enter our third year of 5% growth. That hadn't happened in any of the previous seven years but together we have done that and we are now doing that at a higher rate than any other country in the world. We have now created between us 430,000 new jobs. The highest rate of job creation that was experienced in this country ever. The OECD came out yesterday and said that Australia is at the top of the world league. Our employment growth in 1985 and projected for 1986 is faster and better than anywhere else in the world. Now that's what we have done together.

Where before we were spending so much time fighting one another industrially so often without fundamental reason we now have a situation where as Australians we are able to point to the fact that we have got the lowest level of industrial disputation in this country for 17 years.

We have got a level of inflation which is half what it was two and a half years ago. We are building more homes now than we have for a decade. And whatever way you look at it you and your fellow Australians working with government have produced an economy which is now not at the bottom of the heap, which is recognised in the rest of the world as the best performing economy in the western world. And we are entitled together to be proud of that.

I want to also say to you that we don't regard, that is government doesn't regard and I don't think you regard economic growth, important as it is, as a total end in itself. What growth is about is to try and provide the means of happiness and satisfaction to the people in this country. Of course, those who are in jobs, those who were in jobs and now those who are in the extra 430,000 jobs that we have created, they are better off than they were.

But we also recognise that we have got a responsibility to the less fortunate and therefore I think as a matter of pride to each one of you, to all of us as concerned and compassionate Australians, that in this last two and a half years as well as growing in the way we have and getting to the top of the world league of growth. At the same time as we have done that we have been able to give \$1.5 billion to those in need in this community beyond that amount which we were bound to give under indexation. That is an additional \$1.5 billion so that those most in need have been able to benefit with us and we grow like that.

Now while I talk in aggregates like that, those aggregates really break down into the happiness of individuals. Now it is the case obviously in a country like Australia that not every sector is going to be able to participate in that general economic well being.

And I must, of course, in talking in an area like this talk about our rural economy because the fate, if you like, or welfare of the rural economy in terms of the incomes that they enjoy are not simply to determined by what happens within our Australian economy. Overwhelmingly, what happens in our rural economy, the health of our rural economy is determined by the prices that are received by our rural producers on the international markets of this world. And the great tragedy for Australian rural producers today is that they amongst the most efficient highest productivity producers in the world are getting a raw deal because of the actions predominantly of the Europeans.

The Europeans are pursuing a common agricultural policy which involves massive subsidies to relatively uneconomic producers. They are producing infinitely more than is necessary to feed their own people and with those great and

growing surpluses that are emerging under that subsidisation policy they are corrupting international markets. And the great sufferers are the efficient producers of the world.

The Bureau of Agricultural Economics has just produced a massive study for us which has looked at the impact of the common agricultural policy of the Europeans and it shows that Australia over the last five years has been robbed of \$1 billion per annum as a result of the corruption of international markets by Europeans.

Now we can't of ourselves change that but I want to say that I went to Brussels in February of this year. I went there and I spoke directly and in unqualified terms to the leaders of the European Commission and told them that what they were doing was wrong. But not only wrong in terms of what it was inflicting upon especially Australian producers, it was also wrong in terms of their own economy because the cost and price and wages structure of the countries of Europe have been pushed up because of these perverted policies that they are pursuing. The prices which their own people pay for rural products which go into their wages cost and price structure are much higher than they would be if they didn't have this policy. So I tried to tell that not only were they hurting us but they were also hurting themselves. And I hope that in continuing to put that message to them strongly there and when they visit us here that we will on behalf of our great rural industries start gradually to get some sense into the international marketing mechanisms of our country.

We are pursuing, we of the countries of our region and with the major countries of the world, the proposal that there should be a new multilateral trade ground. And that that shouldn't just concern itself with manufactured goods but it should also concern itself with agricultural products because it is appropriate that there should be reasonable sanity in international marketing arrangements so that producers who are the most efficient in the world, which are ours, should not have their incomes corrupted in that way. And I give you the pledge that we will continue to do that because that is where the major problem is. We recognise that there are some things that we can do in the government and I am proud to say that in terms of the growth of cost faced by rural producers compared with the 12.6% annual average rate of cost increase that faced the rural sector in the seven years before we came to government, we have halved that so that the rate of increase in costs has come down from 12.5% to 6%.

We have tried to more than just having a sensible economic policy which has reduced costs and reduced the rate of inflation. We have recognised that there are specific things that we should do and in this last Budget we have now given the complete rebate in regard to diesel fuel so that primary industry now is the only sector of Australian industry which

has that complete rebate and I believe they should have it because they deserve it. And as far as that section of rural industry is concerned which is concerned with grain harvesting, I think you will approve of the fact that we have now reduced or removed the tariff on grain harvesters and replaced that with a bounty which is of importance to you.

That total package is worth in the order of \$50 million and I give the pledge to the rural community that despite the fact that they have expressed in a rather dramatic way their unhappiness with their lot in the sense of rough things about us, I can understand that. If you have been hurt in the way that the rural sector is in these international markets, you are going to express your concern. I understand that. Despite that fact I give you the pledge that my government will continue to pursue economic policies within Australia that will maintain within measurable and containable bounds the rate of cost increases and do whatever we can in consultation with your organisations to do those things which are going to best meet your needs.

As they say, ultimately the condition of rural Australia is going to be determined by getting good sense into the Europeans. And I can tell you it is pretty hard getting good sense into them. Just try the French, for instance, at the moment and see where you get.

Now those are the things, my friends, that have happened. I believe that you will say with me, I would think in a sense whatever your political persuasion, I think we all know that Australia is a better country now as we come towards the end of 1985 than it was two and a half years ago.

Not because simply we are in the top of the league in terms of economic performance but more fundamentally we are better as a country because we are working together better as a country and that is how we have got to the top of the league.

Now it is not enough for us as a people, for me as Prime Minister heading a government, it is not enough simply to say well we have got over our immediate problems, we are on the road again. What we have got to be thinking about is our long term future. And what I would like to do in conclusion just for a few minutes is to share with you if I may my vision, the governments vision of the future of this country.

We are not going to be able to shape the future of this country and create a country which will be a worthy inheritance for our children if we try and regard ourselves as an isolated country here by ourselves, putting a wall around Australia, some 16 million people and saying to the other 5 billion, it will be 6 billion by the end of this century, 6 billion plus as we go into the 21st century. We are not going to be able with 16 million people to say to 6

billion - we forget you, we put a wall around ourselves, we will look after ourselves. The world is not like that.

If our children are going to inherit a country which will make the fullest possible use of these vast resources to which I have referred. We have to part of the world. And we are fortunate that physically we are placed in that part of the world of Asia and West Pacific which is growing faster than anywhere else. We have the great opportunity now of making a contribution to and benefitting from the growth of this part of the world. That is why in looking to this forward picture for Australia I have attached so much importance to developing the relations with the countries of this region and with no country has it been more important to develop those relations than with China.

What is happening in China today is the single most important thing that is happening in the world. You have a country there which approximately a little under one quarter - 20% of the world's population. It is throwing off the shackles of the deadening Marxist-Leninist ideology which had confined its economic performance. It is stimulating enterprise in that country. Its standards of living are growing. It's opening its doors to the outside world and because of the relationship that I have been able to form with the leadership of China which has been built upon by my Ministers and by industry that has gone there and by representatives of our workers Australia now is in a position where it can say that it has a better relationship with China than any other country has in the world. And that means that we are opening up great markets, great opportunities for our rural producers, for our mineral producers, for our iron and steel industry, for the wool and textile industry, for our transport industry and we are going over the years ahead now with China to develop a relationship which will be of fundamental importance for the future welfare of our country. And we are doing that also with the other countries of the region, the other fast growing countries of the region so that we will have a relationships which will mean that we will be able to use our resources, not just dig up iron ore and coal out of the ground, not just send wool and wheat, as important as all those things will be. But we will be able to develop new industrial enterprises which in conjunction with our friends in China will mean we will be able to diversify, expand our economy in a way in which will create jobs.

But the other thing that we must think about when we are thinking of this vision of the future - what sort of country is it going to be for the children to whom we hand over this country? What sort of education and training are we going to give to our young people? And that's why in the only national address to the nation I have made so far since being in office has been about young people. And that was just before the Budget and I said we are going to make education and

training and the employment creation opportunities for the young our Priority One.

Without going into all the details tonight because there isn't time. I simply want to say to you that on behalf, I know, of all the parents and the older people in this country, what we are doing is to create a situation where I believe by the end of this decade there will be no more unemployment amongst our 16 and 17 year olds. They will either be staying in the education system or going on to university for further technical training or they will be going into employment or they will be going into our new traineeship system. So our young people are going to have the full opportunity to develop and train the talent which each one of them has. Not each child is going to star academically in the early stages of education. They may never star in the education system but there is virtually no child in this country who hasn't got some talent or other which if given the opportunity can be developed to give that child the opportunity of developing into a person which is going to have the capacity for meaningful occupation and also the opportunity to make a bulk contribution to this country.

So what we are doing in the field of education and training is to try and create into the future a workforce of educated and trained young people who are going to be able use and the develop the great natural resources we have and to be part of an outward looking Australia which is going to sell its products in these fast growing areas of the world with which we are developing these relations.

So my friends, that is the sort of vision that I have and my government has and I believe that so many Australians, and I think the overwhelming majority of Australians, can share with us. So let me, if I can, in coming to Warwick give you, as it were, a progress report. Together, I think, we deserve good marks - the people of Australia. We have been sensible, we have learnt that it's better to work together. If we work together we can all be winners.

And the second thing I say in giving you that progress report is to say lets now that we have got the reconciliation, we have got the recovery, lets work on the reconstruction together because we have shown the rest of the world and ourselves that we can turn this economy around in a short time. Let's go on and prove not only to the rest of the world but to our young people in particular that we have discharged, as mature and sensible Australians, the vast obligation that is imposed upon us as being the inheritants of this country which has been handed on to us by our elderly citizens to take advantage of these great resources that are part of our inheritance.

We have finished our parts as mature Australians, let us be

able to say that we have so worked, we have so co-operated that the young people of this country will go on into the 21st century with a country which has an economic infrastructure, a quest to develop those resources, a quest to be part of this growing world and an Australia which will have the capacity to make a contribution to the rest of the world in terms of trying to make that a more peaceful world. Because ultimately all these things that we will have done together to turn our economy around, to develop our resources, to train our young people, ultimately all those things will have been in vain if we can't live in a world of peace.

And that is why on your behalf, I and my government are trying at all the relevant international forums to work for meaningful disarmament. Not to say unilaterally that Australia will disarm because that doesn't make sense. We want both sides to disarm in a meaningful

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