



PRIME MINISTER

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE
FRIDAY 30 MAY 1986

MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES, EXCELLENCIES, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

THIS CEREMONY TODAY MARKS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THE
GOVERNMENT'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE BICENTENARY AND REAFFIRMS
THE STRENGTH AND CLOSENESS OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN
AUSTRALIA AND JAPAN.

THE AUSTRALIAN BICENTENARY IN 1988 WILL MARK THE 200TH
ANNIVERSARY OF EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA. IN
CONSIDERING WAYS TO COMMEMORATE THIS EVENT THE AUSTRALIAN
BICENTENNIAL AUTHORITY HAS SOUGHT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS THAT
WOULD CONSTITUTE A LEGACY OF LASTING VALUE.

WITH THAT IN MIND THE AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED A TASK FORCE TO
INVESTIGATE A PROPOSAL THAT A NATIONAL SCIENCE CENTRE BE
ESTABLISHED TO ENCOURAGE, THROUGH PARTICIPATION, LEARNING
ABOUT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

SUBSEQUENTLY, TO GIVE EFFECT TO THIS PROPOSAL THE AUSTRALIAN
BICENTENNIAL AUTHORITY HAS DECIDED TO CONTRIBUTE \$5.14M FOR
THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY CENTRE.

THIS CENTRE WILL BE A SIGNIFICANT AND LASTING REMINDER OF
THE BICENTENARY.

THE LOCATION OF THE CENTRE ON THIS PRESTIGIOUS SITE IN THE
PARLIAMENTARY TRIANGLE BETWEEN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY AND THE
HIGH COURT AND CLOSE BY THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL GALLERY
SYMBOLISES THE GOVERNMENT'S WISH THAT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LIKE THE ARTS, LETTERS AND THE LAW BE RECOGNISED AS
CONTRIBUTING TO THE ENRICHMENT OF OUR CULTURE, AND,
PARTICULARLY IMPORTANTLY, TO OUR NATION'S DEVELOPMENT.

THIS PROJECT'S RELEVANCE IS NOT HOWEVER, CONFINED TO ONE
SITE IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL. THE CENTRE WILL HAVE A MOBILE
COMPONENT THAT WILL TRAVEL ALL OVER AUSTRALIA. PLANNING IS
WELL ADVANCED AND, DURING THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS, AN
EXPERIMENTAL VERSION HAS VISITED SEVERAL CENTRES IN THE
EASTERN STATES. PUBLIC REACTION DEMONSTRATED CLEARLY THE
BENEFITS OF SUCH AN APPROACH.

THE SCIENCE CENTRE PROPOSAL WAS PROMPTED BY EXPERIENCE GAINED FROM THE SUCCESSFUL "HANDS-ON" SCIENCE CENTRES IN NORTH AMERICA AND CLOSER TO HOME AT THE QUESTACON SCIENCE CENTRE, ESTABLISHED BY THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY HERE IN CANBERRA UNDER THE DIRECTION OF DR MICHAEL GORE.

THE QUESTACON SPECIALIZES IN INTERACTIVE "HANDS-ON" EXHIBITS DESIGNED TO BE USED BY ITS VISITORS. THROUGH THE QUESTACON STUDENTS FROM ALL OVER THIS COUNTRY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ENHANCE THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF SOME OF THE MORE COMPLEX SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS INVOLVED IN PRESENT DAY TECHNOLOGY.

THE QUESTACON AND ITS TRAVELLING COMPONENT HAVE BEEN ASSISTED BY MAJOR COMPANIES, LIKE SHELL AUSTRALIA, COMMONWEALTH INDUSTRIAL GASES, KODAK, ESSO AND FORD. SOME GAVE FINANCIAL HELP WHILE OTHERS DONATED HANDS-ON EXHIBITS. WE LOOK FORWARD NOW TO A CONTINUING ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE AUSTRALIAN PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE.

AUSTRALIA'S DEVELOPMENT DEPENDS MORE THAN EVER BEFORE ON SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS. RAPID ADVANCES HAVE BEEN MADE IN THIS COUNTRY IN A WIDE RANGE OF SCIENCE-BASED FIELDS INCLUDING TELECOMMUNICATIONS, COMPUTERS, BIOTECHNOLOGY AND MEDICAL SCIENCE, AND IN TECHNIQUES FOR MINERAL AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. IF WE ARE TO MAINTAIN OUR PLACE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMY IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE ENCOURAGE FURTHER SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT.

THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY WILL STIMULATE INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERPIN IMPROVED COMPETITIVENESS AND PRODUCTIVITY IN INDUSTRY. IT WILL ASSIST IN MAINTAINING THE LIVING STANDARDS OF ALL AUSTRALIANS.

THERE IS NO MORE IMPORTANT A STARTING POINT FOR THIS PROCESS THAN THE STIMULATION OF CURIOSITY AND INQUIRY ON THE PART OF YOUNG PEOPLE. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS CENTRE WILL HELP TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG AUSTRALIANS TO COME TO TERMS WITH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN WAYS MATCHING THEIR INTERESTS. IT WILL INSPIRE SOME TO PURSUE CAREERS IN THESE FIELDS AND THUS CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROSPERITY AND WELL BEING OF OUR GREAT COUNTRY.

I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT, FOR THE YOUTH OF AUSTRALIA, THIS CENTRE WILL STAND OUT AS ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING ACHIEVEMENTS OF 1988.

TWO WEEKS AGO WHEN I WAS IN JAPAN I WAS DELIGHTED TO LEARN THAT JAPAN WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE AS ONE OF THE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF ITS PARTICIPATION IN OUR BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS. A FUND HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO ENABLE THE JAPANESE PRIVATE SECTOR TO CONTRIBUTE SUBSTANTIALLY TO THIS PROJECT.

I MET MEMBERS OF THE JAPAN-AUSTRALIA BICENTENARY
COMMEMORATION COUNCIL WHILE I WAS IN TOKYO AND CONVEYED TO
THEM AUSTRALIA'S APPRECIATION OF THEIR EFFORTS IN DECIDING
TO ESTABLISH THE FUND. IN MY DISCUSSIONS WITH PRIME
MINISTER NAKASONE I EXPRESSED MY APPRECIATION, AND THAT OF
THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE, FOR JAPAN'S POSITIVE
APPROACH TOWARDS OUR BICENTENARY.

FOR THESE REASONS IN PARTICULAR, AMBASSADOR NAKAJIMA, WE ARE
PLEASED THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO BE PRESENT AT THIS CEREMONY
TODAY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

IT GIVES ME MUCH PLEASURE TO INAUGURATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF
THE AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTRE.
