



PRIME MINISTER

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

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OPENING OF THE PERTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TERMINAL COMPLEX
PERTH - 25 OCTOBER 1986

Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be in Western Australia again - the home, for some time to come I am sure, of a well-known trophy commemorating an earlier mode of international transport - to open a facility serving a more modern, more accessible mode of international travel.

Air transport itself has come a long way in the 25 years since the present terminal was developed for the Empire Games, when the standard international aircraft was the 60 seat Lockheed Constellation.

Today the typical international aircraft carries over 400 passengers and Perth now handles three times as many passengers as a decade ago.

Western Australia's economic development and the immediate requirements generated by the defence of the America's Cup clearly called for an upgrading of facilities.

The result is a total investment of \$100 million and the most modern international airport facility in the country.

Indeed, this airport has found admirers in China where interest has been shown in building a terminal in Guangzhou (Canton) closely based on this facility.

The Commonwealth has contributed some \$75 million to the project: to the new terminal itself, to navigational aids and to safety equipment. A further \$25 million has been invested by the aviation and aviation-related industries.

The terminal will end the congestion and delays of the old combined domestic/international terminal. It includes the latest designs in baggage-handling, check-in security, energy-efficiency and facilities for the disabled.

The decor reflects the unique Western Australian environment, highlighted by a mural donated by the State Government.

The airport also features this spectacular 70 metre high control tower - the highest in Australia. The tower symbolises our faith in Perth's future; it has been built so tall to ensure it remains functional as this international airport expands.

Beginning in 1987, the recently established Federal Airports Corporation will assume responsibility for the management of Australia's major airports, including this one.

This bold commercial strategy is indicative of the Government's concern to make Australia's publicly funded enterprises more cost-effective, more competitive and more efficient.

I welcome the Chairman of the FAC, Mr David Sullivan, and other corporation members to this ceremony. In this new International Airport the Corporation will be taking over a vital, growing concern and manage it wisely for the benefit of all Australians.

Airports are big business. The scale of investment we see around us here is proof of this.

The management of airports by a largely independent body will be of significant advantage to the taxpayers who fund them, the travelling public and the aviation industry. The FAC will be able to act responsively in what is a dynamic market, and run these valuable public assets on a more commercial basis.

Important as the FAC is, it is nevertheless only one element of the Government's overall strategy to improve the efficiency of the aviation industry and the levels of services to the consumer.

This strategy includes the two reviews which have already been undertaken, the Bosch Inquiry into Aviation Cost Recovery and the Butcher/Scully Review of International Air Freight. This Government has made substantial changes to Australian Airlines and Qantas to allow them to operate more commercially. We have been steadily improving Departmental efficiency. A review is also underway of the 1981 Two Airline Agreement.

Most recently, we have taken an in-principle decision to establish a Civil Aviation Corporation to operate air traffic control, flight advisory services, navigational aids, communications systems, and rescue and firefighting services at airports.

The opening of this airport terminal provides an improved gateway not only to a vibrant and exciting part of Australia but to the nation as a whole. At the commercial level the airport is well placed to cater for South-East Asian markets and will no doubt foster their growth.

Tourism in Australia is now growing very strongly, fuelled by Australia's favourable international profile as a tourist destination and sustained by the depreciation of the dollar.

On most recent estimates, the industry contributes about 5 per cent to Australia's GDP and accounts for nearly 400,000 jobs.

This new airport will ensure that a growing proportion of visitors first experience Australian hospitality, which Paul Hogan has made an international by-word, in this "State of Excitement."

Western Australia is already an important and popular tourist destination for both Australian and international visitors, due to its diversity of attractions and excellent facilities.

This new terminal facility will play a major role in welcoming visitors for the America's Cup.

The Cup is a major international event. The Challenge will be one of the biggest sporting event in the world in 1987. The attention of the world will focus on Fremantle and on Australia.

The spin-off from this exciting sports event are enormous. An independent study by the University of Western Australia has shown an expected benefit of around \$600 million to the Western Australian economy.

Western Australia's potential as a base for corporate activity in the Asian and Indian Ocean region will be on display. There will be a large number of business and professional conventions held during the Cup period.

And there will be substantial flow-on benefits to the Australian economy, particularly in tourism.

Which brings me back to this facility, and the Commonwealth's interest - shared, I know, by Brian Burke's Government - in ensuring that expenditure on the defence of the Cup will be of continuing benefit after this, the first of many defences, is successfully concluded.

These benefits should not end with the Cup defence, but continue as a result of the investment, development and exposure of the opportunities this State and this nation can provide.

Western Australia, the State of Excitement, is experiencing a new and exciting period of development with the eyes of the world upon it.

The new Perth International Airport Terminal will ensure that the Commonwealth Government contributes, in a lasting way, at this challenging time.
