



PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
OPENING OF FREMANTLE COMMONWEALTH OFFICES AND CUSTOMS HOUSE
PERTH - 7 FEBRUARY 1987

FREMANTLE IS A CITY THAT THRIVES ON BOTH THE HERITAGE OF ITS PAST AND THE PROMISE OF ITS FUTURE.

ITS HERITAGE FORMS A VITAL PART OF AUSTRALIA'S HISTORY.

ITS PORT WAS THE MAIN ARRIVAL POINT FOR THE EARLY SETTLERS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, AND CONTINUED TO BE A PRINCIPAL ARRIVAL POINT FOR THAT GREAT WAVE OF IMMIGRANTS WHO CAME TO AUSTRALIA AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

AS A RESULT, THIS CITY AND THIS STATE HAVE BUILT UP A TRULY MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY. ETHNIC GROUPS - MANY OF WHOM ARE REPRESENTED HERE - CAN RETAIN THEIR LINKS WITH THEIR OWN CULTURE WHILE PLAYING TO THE FULL A ROLE IN OUR NATIONAL CIVIC LIFE.

FREMANTLE CAN BE PROUD OF ITS ACHIEVEMENTS IN FOSTERING THIS SPIRIT. TODAY'S AUDIENCE ILLUSTRATES JUST HOW DIVERSE AND STRONG ARE THE GROUPS WHICH HELP BUILD THE GREAT COMMUNITY SPIRIT OF FREMANTLE.

TODAY, FREMANTLE'S ROLE AS A POINT OF ARRIVAL FOR IMMIGRANTS MAY HAVE DIMINISHED DUE TO AIR TRAVEL, BUT THE PORT CONTINUES TO HAVE A MAJOR ROLE IN CARGO HANDLING.

AUSTRALIA HAS ALWAYS BEEN A TRADING NATION AND WE MUST REMAIN ONE IF WE ARE TO SURVIVE.

RECENT WORLD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS CONFIRM THAT OUR ABILITY TO EXPORT STILL HOLDS THE KEY TO OUR PROSPERITY.

AS A GOVERNMENT AND INDEED AS A NATION WE HAVE WORKED HARD TO REVITALISE OUR INDUSTRIES AND REORIENT OUR ECONOMY TOWARDS EXPORTING.

TO THOSE ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED HERE WHO ARE INVOLVED IN PRODUCING AND HANDLING THE CARGOES THAT PASS THROUGH THIS PORT, LET ME SAY : YOU ARE EACH IN YOUR OWN WAY DOING A VITAL JOB IN MAKING AUSTRALIA MORE COMPETITIVE AND, ULTIMATELY, WEALTHIER.

YOU ARE HELPING FREMANTLE TO REMAIN A THRIVING PLACE OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND EMPLOYMENT.

FREMANTLE'S PRIDE IN ITS PAST IS FOUND NOT ONLY IN ITS PEOPLE, BUT ALSO IN ITS BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPE.

MR MAYOR, FREMANTLE CITY COUNCIL IS TO BE CONGRATULATED FOR PRESERVING THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THIS CITY. THIS BUILDING IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THAT CONTINUING ACHIEVEMENT.

MY GOVERNMENT IS PROUD TO BE A PARTNER IN THIS WORK, BOTH THROUGH OUR SUPPORT FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND THROUGH THE WORK OF THE AUSTRALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION.

I KNOW TOM URKN WILL BE GETTING TIRED OF MY SAYING THIS, BUT IT IS FITTING THAT HE WHO HAS PLAYED SUCH AN OUTSTANDING PART IN WORKING WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENT THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA SHOULD BE HERE TODAY AT THE OPENING OF ANOTHER PROJECT THAT EMBODIES THE CLOSE CO-OPERATION HE HAS BUILT UP BETWEEN THE LOCAL AND FEDERAL TIERS OF GOVERNMENT.

THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA, AND A NUMBER OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS, HAVE ALSO BEEN CRUCIAL IN PRESERVING AND PRESENTING THE HISTORY OF FREMANTLE.

THESE COMMONWEALTH OFFICES AND CUSTOMS HOUSE HAVE PRESERVED THE HISTORIC FACADES OF SOME OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDINGS, WHILE THE NEW FACADES HAVE BEEN SCALED AND DESIGNED TO COMPLEMENT AND BLEND WITH THE GENERAL APPEARANCE OF THE AREA.

IT IS SOMETIMES FORGOTTEN THAT LESS THAN ONE-THIRD OF ALL FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVANTS WORK IN CANBERRA. THE REST ARE DECENTRALISED, SERVING THE INTERESTS OF THEIR LOCAL CLIENTS IN CITIES AND TOWNS THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA.

FREMANTLE IS NO EXCEPTION. TWO OF THE THREE WINGS OF THIS BUILDING WILL BE OCCUPIED BY THE AUSTRALIAN CUSTOMS SERVICE. THE THIRD WING WILL BE OCCUPIED BY THE DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SECURITY, PRIMARY INDUSTRY, TRANSPORT AND HEALTH.

THIS BUILDING THUS CONSOLIDATES THE PREVIOUSLY FRAGMENTED OFFICES OF THESE AGENCIES INTO ONE SITE, WHICH WILL ENABLE THEM TO PROVIDE A BETTER SERVICE FOR THEIR CLIENTS.

I CAN'T LET THE OCCASION PASS WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE AMERICA'S CUP.

IT WAS A GREAT VICTORY BY DENNIS CONNER, WHOSE EFFORTS TO REGAIN THE CUP HE LOST IN 1983 SHOWED THE WORLD A NEW MEANING OF THE WORD 'PERSISTENCE'.

AS FOR THE KOOKABURRA TEAM, KEVIN PARRY, IAIN MURRAY AND THE CREW, WE CAN ONLY APPLAUD THEIR COURAGEOUS EFFORT AND THE DIGNITY WITH WHICH THEY HAVE TAKEN DEFEAT.

PERHAPS SOME OF OUR CUSTOMS SERVICE PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE COULD HAVE SUGGESTED WAYS OF KEEPING THE CUP HERE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

PERHAPS WE SHOULD HAVE APPLIED A \$10 MILLION EXPORT DUTY ON ANY MAJOR YACHTING TROPHY LEAVING FREMANTLE - REFUNDABLE, OF COURSE, IF THE TROPHY WERE RETURNED WITHIN THREE YEARS.

I DO NOT, HOWEVER WANT TO DWELL ON THE LOSS OF THE CUP. I WANT TO SALUTE THE CITY OF FREMANTLE FOR THE GREAT HOSPITALITY IT EXTENDED TO THE VISITORS - PARTICIPANTS AND SPECTATORS ALIKE - DURING THE CHALLENGE.

THE SPIRIT PREVAILING HERE IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS, WHICH APPARENTLY REACHED ITS HIGH POINT ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT WHEN THE END OF THE CHALLENGE WAS CELEBRATED HERE AS IF IT HAD BROUGHT AN AUSTRALIAN VICTORY, IS A GREAT CREDIT TO OUR COUNTRY, TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND TO FREMANTLE.

MAY I SAY TO YOU ALL WELCOME TO THE NEW FREMANTLE CUSTOMS HOUSE AND THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO DECLARE THESE OFFICES OPEN.
