



PRIME MINISTER

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**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
RECEPTION FOR CAPTAINS OF TALL SHIPS
SYDNEY - 21 JANUARY 1988**

I am delighted to meet the Captains and crew of the Tall Ships representing foreign governments, and the Ambassadors and High Commissioners to Australia of those governments, and to have this opportunity of expressing my appreciation and that of the Australian government and people for your participation in our Bicentennial celebrations.

When the Bicentennial Authority proposed to the Government the idea of a Tall Ships event to commemorate and honour Australia's maritime heritage and our continuing dependence on the sea, we knew that the success of the event would depend ultimately upon the willingness of other governments to send their sail-training vessels to join in our celebrations, to give the event international standing, and to add those elements of drama and spectacle which only the large sailing ships can bring.

But the event - Tall Ships Australia 1988 - brilliant spectacle though it is - has a deeper significance related to Australia's identity as a modern nation, its place in the contemporary world and its hopes for the future.

First, the event symbolizes Australia's diversity as a nation built on migration. We celebrate that diversity.

Since the early 19th century Australia has attracted people from other lands in search of a new way of life, new freedom and new opportunities.

And for most of the first century, they all came by sail.

Secondly, the event symbolises Australia's wish to reach out in friendship to all nations.

The readiness of your governments to send you on a long and hazardous journey around the world to reach us is testimony to the international friendships we prize so highly.

It is quite remarkable to reflect that Tall Ships Australia 1988 has a greater number of international participants than Op Sail '76 organised as part of the Bicentennial celebrations of the United States of America.

But, perhaps most important of all, is the fact that the Tall Ships event brings together the young people of so many nations in a spirit of goodwill, friendship, co-operation and adventure.

These are qualities we Australians value.

They give us hope for a brighter future for the youth of the world.

So I am especially pleased to welcome the 17 representatives of the trainee crews here today.

You and the hundreds of other young seafarers have now faced the age old challenge of the sea which demands self-discipline, team work, self-reliance and endurance.

Your voyage to Australia has been a tough test. You have responded to the challenge in a way which does credit to you and your generation.

We salute you as Ambassadors of goodwill.

Tall Ships Australia '88 has also provided us with a reminder of the perils faced by those who go down to the sea in ships.

India's ship Varuna was, as you know, damaged in the Great Australian Bight.

While we lament her misfortune, we salute the courage and tenacity which has brought her to Sydney to take part in the grand finale of the Event, the Grand Parade of Sail on 26 January.

I am personally delighted that Varuna will be flying India's flag on that day which is the national day for two nations - India and Australia.

I wish you all a safe passage home and hope that the memory of the event will live in your hearts as it assuredly will in ours.

In this spirit we salute you and I ask you to convey our thanks to your Governments, and to your ships' companies.

Yours is a magnificent contribution to our Bicentenary, one that people of Australia will long remember.

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It gives me much pleasure now to present to the Captain of each of the seventeen ships a memento of your participation in Tall Ships Australia '88 and with it the thanks of the Australian people.
