



PRIME MINISTER

EMBARGOED UNTIL MIDNIGHT 25 JANUARY 1988

Today, all around this vast country, from shore to shore and across the many miles between, Australians are celebrating our most momentous anniversary - two hundred years of European settlement.

Australia Day is a focus in our Bicentennial Year when, as well as celebrating our present achievements, we can remember the past and what we owe to the people who have been before us - the Aborigines who have lived on this continent for some 40,000 years - those who settled Australia in 1788 - and those who have made Australia the home of their choice since then.

We are members of a diverse, multicultural society where every person adds his or her own unique contribution to the rich fabric of our lifestyle. One thing and one thing only defines an Australian today and that is a commitment to Australia and its future.

The world has seen that Australians are a people of great courage and determination who are unafraid of meeting a challenge. We can all feel proud of our country, for whether it is in matters of domestic economy, in the international arena, the arts, science, medicine, or on the sports field, we have proved time and again that Australians are achievers.

Today's celebration is one of a host of festivities during our Bicentennial Year and we will have many occasions to stop and reflect on ourselves and our country.

It is important that we should all make a point on this very special Australia Day to remind ourselves that we live in a wonderful country, and to ask ourselves how each and every one of us can contribute to its future. Australia's successful progress into the twenty first century depends so much on the efforts of every single Australian, regardless of our origins, wherever we live.

Join me in celebrating Australia Day.

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