PRIME MINISTER

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY   EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
OPENING OF BRISBANE AIRPORT
BRISBANE - 19 MARCH 1988

David Sullivan, Chairman, Federal Airports Corporation, Peter Morris, Minister for Transport and Communication   Support, Premier Michael Ahern

Queensland has a proud history of involvement in Australian aviation. Bert Hinkler put Bundaberg before the eyes of the world; Qantas commenced regular operations from Charleville in 1922 and has grown to become a major force in world aviation; and the famous association of Kingsford Smith and Ulm with Eagle Farm and Brisbane is exemplified by the blue aircraft, emblazoned with the Southern Cross, which is proudly on display not far from here.

Queensland's long association with aviation is not merely of historic interest.

For if ever a country benefited from man's desire to fly, it was Australia. A well serviced, stable civil aviation industry is essential to our national life. It shrinks the distances between our population centres and our industries, and brings us together as a nation.

It is for this reason that many hundreds of millions of dollars are spent annually by the Commonwealth government on maintaining and developing airports and other aviation infrastructure, such as the state-of-the-art facilities we see here today.

It is for this reason too that the Federal Government has established the Federal Airports Corporation to manage the nation's major airports in a professional and efficient fashion.

The full extent of Commonwealth expenditure on civil aviation is often not well recognised. Even after industry charges are excluded, the Commonwealth is this year contributing some $330 million. The total cost of our involvement in building this new airport has been about $425 million.

The new Brisbane airport is proof that the people of Queensland and Australia are getting value for those substantial expenditures:

- First, we have built an air terminal capable of handling passenger traffic into the 21st century: up to 10,000 people an hour during peak times, or 7 million passengers a year, can be accommodated comfortably here;

- Second, we have built longer runways, to cater properly for long distance international flights;
- Third, we have brought an end to operational restrictions, such as curfews, that retarded development of Eagle Farm over the years, and

- Fourth, we have installed state-of-the-art air traffic control and safety facilities, to ensure Australia's excellent record in aviation safety is maintained.

And in the long run, we have ensured that Brisbane and Queensland can fulfil their enormous potential for national and international tourism.

That is especially important in our Bicentennial year.

In Queensland the Bicentennial means Expo - the largest single event in our Bicentennial calendar, and truly a national event, whose success I believe is assured.

With some 50 Governments and 20 corporations committed to attend, Expo has generated enormous enthusiasm, both among Australians and abroad.

This enthusiasm will be proven when the millions of visitors start coming from interstate and overseas.

The State Government of course has a particularly significant role in fostering the development of the range of facilities to meet the demands of international and national tourists.

But it would have been difficult, to say the least, to cater for their needs without an efficient and comfortable airport system.

Through the efforts of my Government and a committed workforce and project group, Brisbane, and the nation, has that airport and Expo's success is that much more assured.

This airport is a long term investment by my Government in the future of Queensland. I have every confidence that it will provide invaluable service well into the next century.

The people of Queensland and their visitors will from now on be able to take advantage of an airport as good as any in the world.

With that confidence, it gives me great pleasure to declare the new Brisbane International Airport open.

****

005162