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PRIME MINISTER

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**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
PARLIAMENTARY LUNCHEON IN HONOUR OF THE
PRIME MINISTER OF NEW ZEALAND
CANBERRA - 18 AUGUST 1988**

Prime Minister David Lange,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with the greatest pleasure, David, that I welcome you and Naomi to Australia. We attach great importance to this visit and we are especially pleased that you were determined to proceed with it despite your recent illness.

I retain very warm memories of my visit to New Zealand last November. The enduring impression I brought home from that visit was of the many bonds of friendship that reach across the Tasman - strong bonds that will be further strengthened by your visit.

Australians and New Zealanders share much that is important: our democratic system of government, our commitment to personal freedoms, and not least, as proud bearers of the ANZAC tradition, our proven willingness to defend those freedoms when they are under attack.

In politics, business, administration, the law, sport, the arts - in virtually all walks of life - there is close, vital and daily exchange between us. In all these fields, the Australian community has been enriched over the years by the contribution of New Zealanders who have chosen to make their mark in Australia.

Let me take this opportunity to say, Mr Prime Minister, that New Zealanders are and will remain very welcome new arrivals among us.

It would perhaps be invidious to single out the achievements of particular individuals who have left New Zealand to devote their energies and skills to life in Australia.

But I should say that many Australians felt great sadness at the recent death of a great entertainer, a gem of the Australian stage, the late Ricky May.

2.

Prime Minister,

We in Australia have been especially pleased that New Zealand has joined so enthusiastically in our Bicentennial celebrations.

The New Zealand pavilion at Expo has been one of the most popular exhibitions there. The queues outside the pavilion were so long at times that it would have been quicker to fly to New Zealand rather than wait to see the display at Expo - but that didn't deter people from waiting to see the best of what you had to offer.

And all Australians will appreciate New Zealand's Bicentennial gift of the yacht 'Akarana' which will serve as a lasting reminder of our longstanding maritime links.

One hundred years ago, the Akarana achieved the distinction of winning both the Melbourne and Sydney Centenary regattas.

So this gift will also serve to remind Australians - perhaps to our chagrin - that New Zealanders have consistently excelled at sports in this country and have taken home more than a fair per capita share of sports trophies, not least Melbourne Cups.

It is also very fitting that I mention in our new Parliament House that we are looking forward to the visit next week of the Deputy Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament who will be presenting to the Presiding Officers the Distinguished Visitor's chair which will stand in the Senate.

Prime Minister,

In all of these ways the strength of the friendship between Australia and New Zealand is proven.

But we would be wrong to pretend that we agree on every issue, and we would probably be foolish to aspire to perfect agreement.

In particular, Australia regrets the curtailing of New Zealand's defence links with the United States and we have made clear that we disagree with you on the issue which caused the break.

We will continue our strong defence links with the United States as they underpin our defence policy.

However, we are also determined that our defence links with New Zealand continue and I want to take this opportunity to reaffirm the value we place on them.

An increasing number of New Zealand military personnel are coming to Australia for training and there has been considerable expansion in the number of Australia-New Zealand joint exercises.

One of the most important expressions of the Trans-Tasman defence links is the ANZAC Ship Project, where our two Governments are proposing to construct twelve new surface combatants, four of which are planned for New Zealand and eight for Australia. The ANZAC Ship Project represents an affirmation of our strong view of the need for the Australian and New Zealand defence forces to be able to operate together when needed.

Prime Minister,

With the three agreements we have signed today the trans-Tasman relationship will become even more rewarding.

We have achieved free trade in goods and we have created virtually a single Trans-Tasman market. From 1 July 1990, all goods will be able to be transported unhindered across the Tasman.

We have achieved an agreement on trade in services which is probably the most advanced in the world. With only limited exceptions, it provides for the open trade of services between our two countries.

With these two measures in place, there is no doubt that we will see a substantial expansion in the \$3 billion trade between Australia and New Zealand.

In addition, our agreements to look to greater harmonisation of business and competition law and take practical steps to align customs and quarantine arrangements will mean a more consistent environment for business. It will encourage more business to be done across the Tasman and it will make existing business easier to do.

Few countries could have negotiated so much in such a short time; that we have been successful is a testimony to the natural closeness of our two countries and the underlying goodwill and friendship that pervades our dealings.

It is a testimony as well to the valuable role played by business communities on both sides of the Tasman and I take this opportunity to pay them my thanks.

These new agreements also enhance our standing as advocates of a free and open multilateral trading system.

It is vital that Australia and New Zealand continue to voice their support for multilateral solutions to the current problems in the global trading system. So it is a crucial element of our CER arrangements that they do not constitute an exclusive trading bloc and that they do not seek to limit competition in markets on either side of the Tasman.

4.

Our close cooperation in the Cairns Group stands as a significant further example of our commitment to multilateralism. By joining with other nations committed to free and fair trading, we are attacking in the most constructive way possible the restrictions which threaten global agricultural trade.

The Cairns Group has shown that though Australia and New Zealand might be relatively small nations in global terms, we can achieve important goals through a diligent commitment to multilateralism.

Indeed, through active participation in international forums we have been able to exert a constructive influence across a range of important areas. Often Australia and New Zealand have been able to support each other in the promotion of our positions - particularly for example in those multilateral organisations where we are working in the cause of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Prime Minister,

In our own region the stability of the past cannot now be so easily taken for granted. Both Australia and New Zealand must ensure they remain reliable and supportive neighbours to the island States of the South Pacific as they face the challenges of independent nationhood.

Australia is proud of the flow of development assistance we are able to provide Pacific Island Governments. We look upon the achievement of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty as one of our most significant regional policies. And we are active participants in regional political associations such as the South Pacific Forum.

Both our countries share a common interest with other South Pacific countries in the strengthening of democratic institutions in the region. It is in our interest that the region remain free from major power tensions and rivalry. We need to be alert, and to do all we can to deter outside powers from exercising unacceptable influence in the region.

Prime Minister,

In an uncertain world, the value of the resilient and constructive friendship between Australia and New Zealand can never be doubted. It must never be diminished.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I propose a toast, to the enduring friendship between Australia and New Zealand.
