



PRIME MINISTER

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**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
PARLIAMENTARY LUNCHEON FOR HER MAJESTY
QUEEN BEATRIX OF THE NETHERLANDS
CANBERRA - 25 OCTOBER 1988**

Your Majesty,
Your Royal Highness,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I know, Your Majesty, that this is not your first visit to Australia. However, it is your first visit as Queen of the Netherlands and indeed this is the first time the reigning monarch of the Netherlands has ever visited our shores.

I am, therefore, delighted to extend to you and to Prince Claus a very warm welcome as our guest in our Bicentennial year.

Your visit is a significant reaffirmation of the close and warm friendship between our two countries.

Coming on top of the Netherlands' involvement in many of the Bicentennial activities - including the Parade of Tall Ships, the International Naval Salute, the Bicentennial Air Show and, here in Canberra, the generous Dutch participation in the Floriade - your visit is also a timely recognition of the hundreds of thousands of Dutch men and women who have come to Australia to make their new home here.

I am sure that you will both be warmly welcomed by all Australians as you travel around this country - and no doubt you will be greeted with special enthusiasm by the Dutch-Australian community.

Australians are of course proud in our Bicentennial year to celebrate the achievements of the last two centuries, and to acknowledge our enormous debt to those who have built our democratic and prosperous society.

But today we are particularly aware that Dutch links with this continent extend back nearly another two centuries before the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788.

The first Dutch contact with Australia was that of William Jansz in the vessel "Duyfken" in 1605.

Thanks in large part to the efforts of the Dutch United East India Company, Australia's maps still bear testimony to the pioneering role of the Dutch navigators in exploring our coastline.

Indeed the whole continent was known for many years to the rest of the world as New Holland - surely a title based more on optimistic patriotism on the part of the Dutch sailors than an objective observation of this large, dry and occasionally mountainous continent.

Dirk Hartog in the "Eendracht" left his famous pewter plate fixed to a wooden pole on Cape Inscription in 1616. That plate is currently touring Australia in the 'Shipwrecks' Exhibition and we are most grateful to the generosity of the Netherlands' famous Rijksmuseum for lending us a piece of our shared history which is known to every Australian schoolchild.

The State of Tasmania bears the name of Abel Tasman who sighted the western coast of the island in 1642.

Two mountains in Tasmania have been named after Tasman's ships, "Heemskirk" and "Zeehan". I am delighted that you will be able to unveil a fountain commemorating Tasman's visit on Thursday during your visit to Hobart.

Your Majesty, if the seventeenth century was the first period of Dutch contact with New Holland it was by no means the only one.

Because in this century, the people of Australia and the Netherlands fought and died together in defence of their common goals of democracy, freedom, tolerance and opposition to totalitarianism.

And in the years after the Second World War, in a great surge of immigration, Australia was enriched by the arrival of large numbers of men and women from the Netherlands.

Dutch Australians remain proud of their heritage. Indeed, more than 150,000 Australians identify themselves as of exclusively Dutch descent and more than 60,000 speak Dutch at home. Within our multicultural society that does not make them any less Australian. They have through their enormous contributions to the building of our nation, proved beyond doubt their commitment and loyalty to their new home.

The contribution of the Dutch to Australia covers a broad spectrum, including especially in the arts: the film director, Paul Cox whose most recent film honors Vincent van Gogh; the artistic director of the Dance Company of New South Wales, Jaan Flier; the director of the Mildura Art Gallery, Ernst van Hattum; to name a few.

The older generation will certainly remember the radio comedian known as "Mo" who made a tremendous contribution to the development of Australian comedy in the first half of this century. His real name was Harry van der Sluys.

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Only this week, Victorians have been thrilled by the great performance of the famous Dutch cyclist Adrie van der Poel who won the Victorian Sun Tour.

Your Majesty, as well as the warm relationship based on the Dutch community, Australia enjoys a close bilateral relationship with the Netherlands stemming from the historic involvement of both countries in the Asian/Pacific Region, and the economic and commercial role of the Netherlands as a growing investor in Australia and as an entrepot centre for Australian exports to Europe.

The determination and adventurousness of the early Dutch explorers, who discovered Australia by chance in their search for trading opportunities, can provide a lesson today for Australia and the Netherlands. In the new trading circumstances of the late twentieth century there is the opportunity for Australia and the Netherlands to discover each other again, to the mutual benefit of both countries.

In 1987 the value of exports to the Netherlands stood at \$A620 million and the value of Dutch exports to Australia was \$A560 million. This is a substantial economic relationship, but we can do more.

Traditionally our trade relationship has involved Australian primary products such as coal and foodstuffs. Today we in Australia are convinced that we also have other things to offer - in particular, as the spectacular growth of the Asia-Pacific region continues, I would particularly encourage Dutch businesspeople to pay regard to the investment potential of Australia.

We have much to offer, both in our own right and as an entry to the markets of our region: our stable political environment, our efficient financial system, our abundant natural resources, our well qualified reservoir of technical and professional expertise, and our highly competitive tax structure.

The potential Australia provides for European countries looking for a springboard into the lucrative and developing financial and trading centres of this region cannot be overemphasised, for Australia has excellent relations with the countries of the region.

The Australian Government is keenly interested in the single market process in Europe. Already, the European Community, taken as a whole, ranks as our second largest export market and our largest source of imports.

The development of a single market with 320 million inhabitants - a market larger than any other in the industrialised world - will surely have a profound impact on global economic and trading relationships.

At the same time, Australia strongly believes that the positive rewards of the single European market, which is to be achieved by 1992, will not be reaped if an inward looking, "fortress Europe" approach is allowed to develop - but I am confident that this will not eventuate.

Your Majesty, the range of areas on which I have spoken clearly demonstrates the warmth and closeness in the relationship between the people of our countries.

Already your visit is adding a new dimension to that friendship. I would like to give you our special thanks for agreeing to lend your name to the establishment in Canberra of the Queen Beatrix Floriade Sculpture Collection. This collection will not only reflect your personal interest in sculpture, it will also provide Canberra's young sculptors with a valuable opportunity to contribute to the aesthetic development of the nation's capital.

I again welcome you, His Highness Prince Claus and your most distinguished party to Australia and wish you a most enjoyable visit.
