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PRIME MINISTER

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**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
OPENING OF ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH BUILDING
CSIRO DIVISION OF ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH
ASPENDALE, VICTORIA - 19 MARCH 1990**

I am delighted to be here at the CSIRO Division of Atmospheric Research to inspect your research work on the changes taking place in the regional and global atmosphere. Bob Chynoweth has told me directly of the fine work being done here. It is vitally important work, for there is no greater global environmental concern than the greenhouse effect and the depletion of the ozone layer.

The changes in the chemical composition of the atmosphere now occurring are likely to bring about significant modifications to climate as a result of the greenhouse effect.

Similarly, the CFCs released into the atmosphere by human activity are depleting the ozone layer.

Your research into both of these phenomena, and your related work on atmospheric pollution and the impact of climate change on water resources, deserve the support and encouragement of all Australians.

You will be aware that my Government is funding a greenhouse research program, with most of the money going to CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology. Indeed, I am advised that of the 140 staff here at Aspendale, 20 were hired in the last year through the Commonwealth's greenhouse research program.

So I am pleased today to be able to inform you that we will be providing at least \$5.7 million a year over the next three years for greenhouse research.

This will enable CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology to continue their research, and will facilitate the establishment of a dedicated research grants scheme administered by the National Greenhouse Advisory Committee - as foreshadowed in my Environment Statement last year.

So your jobs, and your work, are secure under us, as they ought to be.

I have established a Special Working Group on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions within Australia. At the end of last year the preliminary report of the working group was released for public comment.

Early measures can be taken, through such simple changes as using new energy efficient light bulbs and improving ventilation and air conditioning systems - and through the accelerated phasing out of CFCs my Government is overseeing.

We will commit ourselves to achievable target reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, based on scientific assessment and set in consultation with government, industry and environmental groups.

We will do this following receipt of the report of the International Panel on Climate Change later this year. And we will be working for the inclusion of targets in an international convention on climate change to bind all the nations of the world to a program of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

When I issued my Environment Statement - 'Our Country, Our Future' - last July, I said that its announcements, while comprehensive and vitally important, would not of themselves see the job done. And earlier this year I undertook to provide a progress report on the Environment Statement - which I am releasing today.

My Government has, in the eight months since the release of 'Our Country, Our Future', built on the commitments in that Statement by making a number of important new decisions and taking further steps to protect the environment. These include:

- . The transfer of 98 per cent of the Conservation Zone into Kakadu National Park and the referral of Coronation Hill and other potential mineral developments in the remaining 2 per cent area to the Resource Assessment Commission;
- . A decision not to move the Sydney naval fleet to Jervis Bay;
- . Intensification of our campaign to prevent mining ever taking place in Antarctica, successfully eliciting the support of more and more countries to our cause, the most recent being New Zealand
- and establishment of an Antarctic Foundation in Tasmania;

- . Banning the barbaric practice of driftnet fishing in Australian waters and taking a leading and successful role in gathering international support for a ban in the South Pacific region to be followed by a global ban;
- . Providing financial support for the Salamanca Agreement on the Tasmanian forests, and for the agreements recently negotiated for the South East forests of NSW and the East Gippsland forests of Victoria;
- . The preparation of the most stringent guidelines in the world for new kraft eucalypt pulp mills and the provision of funding, jointly with industry, for further research on lowering the chlorine content in bleaching processes;
- . An agreement with the Goss Labor Government to conduct a comprehensive joint land use study of Cape York;
- . Conclusion of a management agreement with the Goss Government for the Queensland Wet Tropics World Heritage area and provision of \$10 million over three years for management of the area;
- . A ban on the importation of non-antique ivory into Australia, and the successful pursuit of prohibition at the meeting of the Convention on the Importation of Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Lausanne last October;
- . The banning of the use of CFCs in ordinary aerosol cans and a rate of phasing out of other CFCs which makes Australia's program the toughest in the world;
- . A decision for Australia to host the next annual meeting of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (the IUCN), in Perth in November; and
- . Announcement of the World Heritage nomination of Shark Bay in Western Australia.

By any standard this is an outstanding list of environmental achievements for such a short period, and it is not an exhaustive one. As the Progress Report on the Environment Statement shows, very substantial advances have been made already in implementing the numerous commitments I made in the Environment Statement last July.

In building on that progress in implementing 'Our Country, Our Future', I am able to advise you today, and through you, all Australians, of a series of measures which continue our commitment to the protection of the environment.

World Heritage Listings

Australia now has eight sites on the World Heritage List, and Shark Bay would be the ninth. Australia is already acknowledged by the IUCN as having done more than any other country to advance World Heritage values.

Today I can announce that the sub-Antarctic Heard and Macdonald Islands will be nominated this year for World Heritage Listing.

This reaffirms my Government's determination to preserve that entire fragile region of the world.

Protection of World Heritage Areas

The cane toad is beginning to pose a threat to Kakadu National Park. Recent research into eradication of the cane toad, funded by Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, has now been evaluated.

Further research on impacts of the cane toad, and short and long term measures for controlling it, is now required.

The Government will provide an additional \$1.25 million, over three years, to CSIRO, for this purpose. We are seeking a commensurate funding commitment from relevant States and the Northern Territory.

Mimosa pigra is a fast-growing prickly shrub from Central and South America which is invading Northern Australian wetlands at an alarming rate. It, too, is a threat to Kakadu National Park and Aboriginal lands.

To combat the spread of mimosa through effective biological control agents, an extra \$1.25 million will be provided to CSIRO over the next three years. Funding at this level will ensure the effective continuity of work already underway.

Preservation of Wilderness

The National Wilderness Inventory, initiated by my Government in 1986 and accelerated through additional funding announced in the Environment Statement, will provide an important management tool for assessing the impact of development proposals on wilderness areas.

To ensure that the Wilderness Inventory is completed within three years, a further \$400,000 will be provided over the period to mid-1993.

Australia's Forests and Forest Industries

There can be little doubt that Australians are becoming increasingly aware of the need to preserve substantial areas of our native forests and that they prize highly those areas which have remained relatively unmodified by human activity. My Government is committed to this end, but we are also determined to develop a thriving, secure timber industry, based on adding maximum value to the product.

We are developing a national forest strategy. A key element in our strategy will be expansion of the available resource through the rapid increase in the establishment of eucalypt plantations to supply expanding amounts of pulpwood. We will examine all measures to facilitate the establishment of this resource.

We will require woodchip exporters to commit themselves to the establishment of plantations. And, in keeping with the Government's policy of wanting to add value to all our produce, we will ask all of the major woodchip export companies in Australia to present to us their plans for adding value to this product before the end of the decade.

On the issue of paper we are aware that a market acceptance of somewhat duller papers could dispense with the need for chlorine bleaches in pulp mills. As our contribution to opening up this option, we will review the sales tax on non-chlorine bleached products.

While this, of itself, would not affect overseas demand for high brightness paper from kraft export pulp mills, we are prepared to play our part domestically in raising community awareness of the benefits of non-chlorine bleached paper.

Soil

The ACF and the National Farmers' Federation have been working closely with my Government in the formulation and implementation of measures, costing \$320 million, to combat soil degradation in the Year and the Decade of Landcare.

In the Environment Statement I announced, alongside those measures, a review of the taxation arrangements relating to the prevention and treatment of land degradation, including re-vegetation and fencing. That review will be finalised in time for the 1990-91 Budget.

The Landcare Australia Foundation has the responsibility of raising sponsorship for landcare education and community activities.

We have decided to provide tax deductibility for donations to the Landcare Australia Foundation, from 1 April 1990.

The establishment of landcare groups has been proceeding at a most encouraging rate; indeed there has been a flood of applications.

We will supplement existing funding with an extra \$1.3 million over three years to accelerate the establishment of landcare groups.

Minesite Rehabilitation and Offshore Platform Removal

The Government is concerned that appropriate steps be taken by the mining industry to ensure that environmental rejuvenation takes place through minesite rehabilitation. Industry shares this concern.

We will review the taxation arrangements as they apply to minesite rehabilitation and the removal of offshore petroleum platforms and announce the outcome in the 1990-91 Budget.

Water and Air Pollution

My Government is the first Australian Government to propose the adoption of national water quality standards. The fouling of Australia's rivers, lakes and beaches has become a national problem, although constitutionally the responsibility for water quality lies with the States.

Sydney's beach pollution must be dealt with first and foremost by the NSW Government. But it is now a national scandal and my Government can help in ways which, though modest, may help provide the long-term solution.

Sydney's beach pollution is unlikely to be solved by working out different ways of pouring more and more sewage into the ocean.

The long-term answer must lie in alternative technologies, such as the Memtec filtration system and microwave sterilisation. Dryland sewage disposal methods would avoid the need to pump sewage into the ocean. Since July of last year my Government has provided over \$1 million in support of these alternative technologies.

We announced recently that up to \$4 million a year from the existing Grants for Industry Research and Development Scheme will be made available for the development of new technologies in waste and environmental management. Within that allocation, priority will be given to trialling and development of new technologies for sewage and effluent treatment. This will be of relevance not only to Sydney's beach pollution problem but to the problems of rivers and waterways in other States.

Unlike the Coalition, which has recoiled from assuming a strong role for the Commonwealth in acting in the national interest to protect the environment, we will strive for national standards of air and water quality - and national strategies to implement them.

We accept the value of an Environment Protection Agency to co-ordinate this work and will move to establish such a body in our next term of Government.

Information Bases

We cannot move to a truly sustainable society in which the proper balance between environment and economic development is struck, and maintained, until we have sound and comprehensive biological information.

The Government therefore has decided to provide \$2.4 million over three years to accelerate the Australian Biological Resources Study.

This will complement the National Wilderness Inventory and other work on environmental data bases currently underway.

Biological Diversity

My Government is committed to the survival of a full suite of flora and fauna species. I pledged in the Environment Statement that Australia would play a leading role in the development of an international convention for the protection of biological diversity. We are calling on the world to come together to begin formulating such a Biodiversity Convention.

Australia will offer to host a negotiating session for a Biodiversity Convention, leading up to the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in 1992 which, it is anticipated, will adopt the Convention.

The Convention will be aimed at arresting the frightening rate of species loss and developing a strategy to ensure their future survival.

In playing our part at home, we have established a ten year ~~endangered~~ endangered species program and we will consider the enactment of Commonwealth endangered species legislation.

A further element of our strategy to maintain biological diversity in Australia is a program to 'save the bush' which I announced in the Environment Statement, and which has ongoing funding of \$1.5 million a year.

We will expand the Save the Bush program by providing an extra \$2 million over the next three years.

Recycling

If we are to use our natural resources more efficiently, save energy and reduce pollution, then we must minimise waste and increase the rate of recycling.

My Government has already adopted a number of measures for encouraging paper recycling, including trialling recycled paper in selected Government Departments and removing the sales tax on a range of recycled paper products.

Today I can announce further measures to help lift our national performance in the areas of environmentally sound packaging and recycling.

With the co-operation of the States, Territories and industry, we will introduce a scheme of "green labelling" of products on the basis of their environmental friendliness.

In the first instance the scheme will concentrate on packaging. Under a system of green labels, manufacturers will have a greater incentive to package products in an environmentally sound manner.

Once we have tackled this problem we will extend the green labelling scheme beyond packaging itself and to the products themselves.

In addition, we will develop a national waste minimisation and recycling strategy - once again through a co-operative approach with the States and industry. We will be seeking the establishment of minimum goals for rates of recycling.

And through the Australian and New Zealand Environment Council we will be seeking the co-operation of the States and Territories to audit the nation's major sources of waste. A similar survey will be proposed for the nation's waste and recycling facilities.

We will also review the indirect taxation arrangements as they apply to equipment used in recycling processes.

Rudall River

Western Australia's new Premier, Carmen Lawrence, has recently announced that there will be no uranium mining in Western Australia under her Government. My Government supports that position - and as a result the Rudall River uranium mining proposal will not go ahead.

North Head of Sydney Harbour

Following the relocation of the School of Artillery to Townsville, the Commonwealth will be able to release 30 hectares of Army land at North Head for inclusion in the Sydney Harbour Foreshores National Park.

The facilities which remain, including heritage buildings, will be used for the headquarters of the Army's Training Command. This move will, in turn, result in a further significant area at Georges Heights also being released for inclusion in the national park.

Fraser Island

We will be assisting the Goss Government to conduct a study of the heritage values of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region. My Minister for the Environment will be providing a comprehensive submission to that inquiry on the natural values the area contains.

When that study is completed, we will determine which areas may be worthy of World Heritage nomination.

My friends,

While each and every one of these new measures will have a favourable impact on our natural environment, they also fit into an overall framework of sensible decision-making which moves us along the path of ecologically sustainable development.

Late last year I initiated a set of processes, involving government, industry, union and conservation groups, to give practical effect to the concept of ecologically sustainable development in the agricultural, forestry, fisheries, mining, energy, manufacturing and tourism industries.

A conceptual paper on ecological sustainability is being prepared. Working groups for each industry category will be formed to recommend to Government the ways of applying that concept to decision-making for each industry.

For my Government, environmental considerations are not at the periphery, being brought into the Cabinet room only when a decision is to be made about a national park or a rainforest. We are integrating environmental considerations with our economic decisions, to ensure ecological sustainability. The Environment Minister is a member of the Government's powerful Structural Adjustment Committee and environmental impacts are formally addressed in Cabinet submissions.

And on the key question of constitutional powers, my Government has demonstrated its preference for negotiation with State Governments - but also its preparedness to override particular States where the processes of consultation and co-operation do not yield a result which we judge to be in the national interest.

I reaffirm all of the undertakings I have given in relation to the use of the Commonwealth's constitutional powers.

So in conclusion, I thank you for inviting me here to see first hand the most valuable work being done by CSIRO on climate change. The CSIRO enjoys a fine reputation for outstanding research and development work. Your research program here is a credit to all of you.

And I can assure you that you will continue to receive the support from my Government that you deserve - just as we are committed - as custodians of the environment - to pass on to our children, and theirs, an environment protected, an environment enriched, a better country, a brighter future.

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	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93
	(\$ million)		
Greenhouse research	5.7	5.7	5.7
Cane Toads	0.5	0.5	0.25
Mimosa	0.5	0.5	0.25
National Wilderness Inventory	0.1	0.1	0.2
Tax deductibility for Landcare Australia Foundation	0.2	0.3	0.4
Extra Landcare Groups	0.3	0.5	0.5
Save the Bush	-	1.0	1.0
Australian Biological Resources Study	-	1.0	1.4
	7.3	9.6	9.7
East Gippsland agreement	4.5	4.8	
	11.8	14.4	9.7