



## PRIME MINISTER

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**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER  
LAUNCH OF THE ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT  
INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE, 30 MAY 1991**

Environment management is an industry that clearly will assume greater importance in coming years. Equally clearly, this association we are launching today will play a key role in ensuring the industry can meet its new responsibilities and take up the many opportunities that will emerge.

The formation of your Association is another indication of the rapid changes taking place in the attitudes of Australians to environmental matters.

We are growing acutely aware that much of our landscape bears the mark of human activity, and that this has wrought permanent environmental change - and, not infrequently, degradation. Australians are coming to grips with our responsibility to care for and to protect the unique landscape that is our national home.

For industry, this poses the double challenge: to be not only economically competitive but also ecologically sustainable. We must conserve our finite resources, reduce polluting emissions and preserve our natural environment in a way which enables us to satisfy integrated economic and environmental objectives.

Meeting this challenge will demand we seriously rethink the way in which we, and the rest of the world, carry on our agriculture and other primary activities, undertake our manufacturing processes, build our homes and plan our cities.

But at the same time this double challenge brings with it new commercial opportunities. It is highly significant that, even in difficult economic times, Australians are demanding more and better environmental management services. You are, indeed, an industry with a future.

The Government has, of course, responded to changes in community attitudes by putting in place many environmental initiatives. For your Association, none is more important than our initiative to develop strategies to achieve ecologically sustainable development.

Last year we released a paper on Ecologically Sustainable Development as a stimulus for discussion on this issue. Since then, nine sectoral working groups have been established to help translate the concept of ESD into effective strategies.

The working groups are to complete their reports by October, for consideration at the Special Premiers' Conference planned for November.

Given the complexity of the issues and the often conflicting interests involved, I am encouraged by the progress that is being made. The outcome of the process will provide a sound basis for us to achieve ecologically sustainable development.

But clearly, government can only do so much in achieving ESD. The bulk of the task rests with the community and the private sector.

Environment management industries - and their new association - can contribute in a major way to achieving the goal of ecologically sustainable development and, at the same time, helping make Australia a 'clever country'. Your industry can help to demonstrate that ecologically sustainable development is consistent with strong economic growth.

This is an area where Australia has the potential to develop a world class industry, capable of producing services and products which the rest of the world will increasingly demand. In particular, the possibilities for developing industry opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region are enormous, as standards of living rise and, with them, demands for effective environmental management.

In many ways you are the focal point for the interaction of those who face environmental problems and those who possess the skills, technologies or products to solve them. This will help the industry and, through the removal of environmental problems, it will help the people of Australia and the world. Your Association can also be the catalyst for the development of networks within the industry with the size and skills to tender for, and to win, overseas contracts.

I might mention that at the meeting of my Science Council earlier this month, industry representatives identified several impediments to further growth of the waste management industry in Australia - an industry which is estimated to be worth some SUS 200 billion a year world wide. Members of the Science Council were impressed by the export opportunities that exist if we have the courage and the commitment to seize them.

As a result of that meeting, Ministers who are members of the Council undertook to examine carefully the recommendations put forward by the industry. A working party, with industry representation, will be set up to examine the specific recommendations made to the Science Council and to develop appropriate policy strategies to enable Australia to capture those export opportunities. These will then be referred to the Cabinet Sub-committee on sectoral industry initiatives that I announced in my Statement to Parliament on 12 March.

Progress on some matters that have been raised will not be easy. But I want to assure you that my Government will do all we can to remove impediments and to provide a framework in which the full potential of the waste management industry can be realised.

So for many reasons the creation of this Association is a welcome development. I congratulate your Steering Committee and interim Council for the excellent job they have done. I appreciate also the role that has been played by the Clunies Ross Foundation in supporting the formation of the Association.

It is with pleasure, and with good wishes for the future, that I now launch the Environment Management Industry Association of Australia.

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