



PRIME MINISTER

**ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, MP
TOYOTA PLANT, ALTONA MELBOURNE, 4 MARCH 1992**

Mr Toyoda, Premier Kirner, Mr Yamaguchi, Mr Johnston,
distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

This is a great day for our motor vehicle industry. It is
also a great day for Australian industry.

The people gathered here are representative of the new
direction in Australia - progress in partnerships.

Increasingly in Australia we are recognising that there
is strength in partnerships - between government and
business, business and unions. Between Commonwealth and
State governments.

We are recognising how much there is to be gained from
being a nation with unity of purpose.

It is for the same reason that we seek partnerships with
business in other countries, particularly in countries in
our region.

We seek them because we know that is where our future
strength substantially lies - in integration with global
markets, and integration especially with Asia and the
Pacific.

Japan, of course, is one of our great partners - and
there is no better example of the partnership than that
with Toyota.

Toyota came to Australia thirty years ago. It was a very
different place. We were more insular, dare I say more
British, in those days?

Certainly there was a great deal more apprehension about
the region in which we lived, and a failure to comprehend
the change that was about to occur there.

Given the speed and the dimensions of that change, it's a
failure we might be forgiven - but when we failed in that
we also failed to understand much of our future reality.

Last year Toyota sold more cars than anyone else in Australia.

Today the one millionth Toyota will be driven off the assembly line.

On a day like this there are a great many things which could be said in praise of the Toyota company.

Not only in regard to its world leadership in the motor industry and the role of Dr Toyoda, but its faith in this country and its people.

It is the commitment to quality which has made Toyota the number one car manufacturer in Australia in 1991. But, given Toyota's legendary determination to look to the future, it is more appropriate to talk about this new plant - this new investment in the Australian motor vehicle industry.

Toyota's decision to build this new plant is a very welcome show of confidence.

It is a major turning point in our manufacturing industry. It's no less significant for the car industry than the decision of General Motors to build Holdens in Australia in the 1940s.

For with this new plant Australia will enter world markets - with a world product for the first time.

It's worth remembering that this was the first country outside Japan in which Japanese companies established vehicle manufacturing facilities.

It is pleasing to have Toyota say again loudly - this is a good place to manufacture.

We are delighted to have Toyota demonstrate that they share our belief in the industry's ability to be competitive in the world.

It demonstrates that our intention to cut tariff rates to 15% and end quotas has not only not meant the end of investment, but a renewal of it.

Indeed, a new car industry is being built.

Above all, this new plant is proof that Australia can do what it must do - build an internationally competitive manufacturing industry.

And to do that we must do a great deal more of what has been done here.

The creative workplace agreement between Toyota and 6000 employees reached here last December sets a new benchmark for industrial relations in this country.

All concerned will benefit - and that means all Australians.

It's the kind of workplace agreement which will increasingly characterise business in Australia.

Mr Toyoda, ladies and gentlemen, you may take this ceremony today as signalling the emergence of a much stronger Australia in the 1990s.

Stronger through partnerships like this - through creative workplace environments such as this one will be.

Stronger through greater incentives for business to invest in worthwhile long term projects. With low interest rates, low inflation and low cost of labour giving us a cost of capital regime at least competitive with other countries.

You will see us stronger through a vastly improved infrastructure. Through more efficient ports, new and better roads and, at last, a highly efficient, competitive rail system. Through cheaper electricity under the National Grid Corporation.

Above all you will see a stronger Australia emerging from a clearer sense of direction, a robust and mature national identity.

I believe you will see that manifest in countless ways: from the new commitment, creativity and purpose of Australian workers to the willingness and determination of government to venture forth and strike new partnerships in the world and in our region.

You are going to see in future an Australia of much more independent mind and of wholehearted belief in the future.

We Australians may take great heart from this ceremony today. It is a landmark in our history - a very significant step forward.

In this context I want to take the opportunity to congratulate my colleague and friend, the Minister for Industry, technology and Commerce, Senator Button, who has done more for Australian industry than perhaps any other politician this century and who will be regarded as one of this country's greatest reformers. This ceremony today might well be seen as being in part a tribute to his efforts.

It remains for me to congratulate the Toyota Company, the unions and workers, and everyone else associated with the project.

I wish you all well with this great enterprise.