



PRIME MINISTER

ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, MP
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE LUNCHEON
FOOTBALL PARK, ADELAIDE
20 MARCH 1992

Ladies and gentlemen.

This is my fourth visit to Adelaide in as many weeks, and it is always a pleasure to be here.

This is a remarkable city by any standards, I always think of it as a brave city - a civilised and cultured place at the bottom of the world between the desert and the deep blue sea.

The Adelaide Festival is the great measure of that of course.

It is one of the great arts festivals of the world.

It's a statement of confidence in ourselves - the kind of confidence which looks outward to the rest of the world and welcomes the world in.

I came over for a couple of days a fortnight ago and while I was here I spent an hour in the Adelaide Art Gallery - which is probably the best small gallery in Australia.

Look around in there and you will see how the idea of Australia, and what it is to be Australian, has developed over the past two hundred years.

You can see how this place was first seen through European eyes, and how those eyes steadily opened. You can see the vision grow stronger and our regard for the place grow deeper.

Until you see in those fantastic canvasses of Roberts and Streeton 100 years ago an image of Australia which could only be Australia.

The image continues to be our own today.

Keep looking in the gallery and you will see twentieth century images of Australia and Australians - all of them influenced by European styles and taste, but all of them ultimately expressing something quintessentially Australian.

It might seem strange to begin this little speech by talking about art, but I think there are a couple of broad contemporary lessons in there for us.

To begin with, the Adelaide Festival and the Adelaide gallery both tell us that it is futile to be parochial, to close ourselves off to overseas influence. We need to keep the windows open so we can see out, and the world can see in.

Broaden the vision. Don't be frightened of the light. That's how we grow.

The second lesson is the other side of the coin.

You know what the critics said about the first Roberts and Streetons. They said they were awful - a "pain to the eye".

They said as their predecessors had said, and even as their successors were saying well into the twentieth century, that Australian subjects were basically not fit for great paintings, and that the modern way of seeing things was horrible and to be resisted at all costs.

I could point to many other examples of this ancient cultural cringe - but I will attempt to put it in a more positive way.

There was bound to be a tendency in Australia to shrink from our own reality, from the uniqueness of the place - just as there was bound to be an equal tendency to exaggerate our virtues and achievements.

Both - jingoism and cringing - are debilitating afflictions.

But in the quest for national growth - in the effort to realise all our potential and make this country as great as it can and should be - I would prefer to err on the parochial side.

I'd be the last to say that we should reject our European heritage.

But I do have a complaint against those who have allowed themselves to become less than whole-hearted in their commitment to this country.

The fact is that over the years we have been damaged by the people who have talked us down, who shrink from the Australian reality, who resist change even when change

is imperative, who hesitate - who say, but what will our old masters think?

There will be chaos.

You know, mayhem and anarchy - like an Australian Rules Football match.

It's a peculiar game, Australian Rules - to an English person or a Sydneysider, very peculiar at first.

As it evolved from the marriage of the British and Irish to Australia there have always been those who despised it as a rude colonial thing.

Many of these disparaging types, I confess, lived in Sydney.

But you're looking at a convert.

It is a definitive Australian game - the unique one.

Mainly skill but with an element of chance and all played out on a great broad slice of turf of indeterminate dimensions.

It's a measure of our character, our spirit and our capacity for invention.

I like the hip and shoulder in Australian Rules Football - I like it because I do like to keep my own shoulder against the door - keeping the pressure on for change.

I believe we need to do that in Australia.

In our post colonial culture there are still a lot of people whose instinct is to resist change - who would watch opportunity, even necessity, pass them by rather than make the changes necessary to grasp it.

In 1992 we have to grasp these opportunities.

That is why, as we continue with the changes we started in the eighties, as we implement the strategies for recovery and growth in One Nation - as we take these necessary structural steps, I have also been arguing for a more robust independent outlook.

Dr Hewson is wrong when he says that this is a distraction. He could not be more wrong. He is also wrong when he says that the drive for an Australia which speaks with a mature and unambiguous voice will not create jobs.

Not one job, he says.

I do not believe that business people will agree.

Unless they believe that ambition, confidence, pride, common goals firmly held, cohesion and cooperation, enthusiasm - unless there are business people in Australia who think these things are not important to success, Dr Hewson will not find many people to agree with his assessment that I have been creating a distraction.

These things are essential in business, as they are in football. They are essential to the success of Australia.

To speed the recovery, to make the most of our strengths, to come out of recession stronger than ever before - and we can do all these things - we need confidence in ourselves.

We have every reason to look forward to the future in this country - but we won't make the future as good as it should be if our view is obscured by a patina of old protocols, and our energies dissipated in reflexive salutes to other countries before we salute our own.

We must not let the faint-hearted, or the knockers, or the whingers and the cringers, get in the way of the future.

One Nation is about the future.

One Nation is a program for recovery which calls on Australians to pool their resources, to enter into partnerships with each other, to commit themselves to cooperative enterprise.

By investment in major infrastructure projects, particularly road and rail, in the reform of aviation policy, in seeking cooperative relationships between business and unions, the states and the commonwealth, the private and the public sectors - in these various ways it seeks to close the gaps between Australians.

It seeks to stimulate the economy, and to make investment in the sorts of businesses Australia needs a much more attractive proposition.

It seeks and will deliver low inflation growth over the next decade. It will deliver tax cuts equivalent to those promised by Dr Hewson - but without a consumption tax.

One Nation is a document of inclusion.

For instance, huge amounts will be invested in technical training to bring this third strand of education into line with the other two - that is to say, giving more kids - many more kids - life opportunities by participating in education. This same step will of course be of great long term benefit to business and industry.

There is a certain deliberate chemistry to One Nation.

We consulted with business so that we could find the most practical solutions, the most effective ways of getting the recovery going and seeing that it was strong.

We consulted with unions, states and the community for the same reason and to maximise the level of national commitment.

It is a social document as well as an economic one - it recognises how essential it is that everyone contributes to the recovery and everyone shares in its rewards.

Ladies and gentlemen.

South Australia will share in the benefits of One Nation.

It will share in the programs designed to bring benefits to all Australians - programs like the overhaul of TAFE, the reform of aviation, labour market programs - and in specific programs in this state.

To mention three of the major ones:

As I am sure by now you are aware, one of the major undertakings in the infrastructure program will be the conversion of 775 kilometre Melbourne-Adelaide railway to standard gauge.

As you also know, we have offered to take over responsibility for substantially upgrading the Sydney Adelaide road link, which, together with the Melbourne - Brisbane link will provide a high quality highway network between our four largest cities.

We have provided \$8 million for the construction of the rail loop at Outer Harbour, as part of a \$100 million upgrading of the port directed at handling time-sensitive cargo between East Asia, Sydney and Melbourne.

All these projects, along with every measure in the One Nation document, are designed to bring on recovery, create jobs, build our strengths and deliver to all Australians hope and opportunity.

With low inflation locked in, with a vastly improved industrial culture, with manufacturing exports rapidly growing, with a much more competitive and efficient financial and business culture we can come out of this recession much stronger than we have ever been.

One Nation is designed to assure us that the recovery will be faster and stronger.

That our economy will be strong, and not least because the nation will be strong.

It's appropriate on this occasion to borrow an image from football - the strongest team is the one which best uses its strengths, which develops its skills to the highest level and deploys them most effectively, which works cohesively with a common desire for success, and which does not let the bumps and misfortunes along the way, knock them off their stride.

That is the aim of One Nation. To make us stronger within so we can be strong in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen.

It seems to me that there are two broad models of society - of how a society best operates.

The first one I believe broadly describes the way Australia has for too long been conceived and operated.

It is the castle with the drawbridge raised - the few inside attempting to extract by various deceits and stratagems enough energy from those outside to make the place economically viable.

Now and then some new measure occurs to them - you know, inviting a few select ones into a garden party to get them on side: or now as Dr Hewson proposes, they go galloping out into the provinces to collect a tax on the food they eat, the clothes they wear, and the services on which they rely.

The other way - and I believe it broadly describes One Nation - lowers the drawbridge.

It's principle is inclusion. It broadens the social base - pools our energies and talents, aims at growth, encourages wholehearted loyalty and commitment, cohesion, nation building.

It assumes that a popularly elected government is elected to govern - not to pull out of the social equation.

That is my philosophy. It is the philosophy of One Nation.

If this is more of a republican philosophy than my political opponents then I am more of a republican.

But that is not the key word: the key word is Australia, the future of this country and its people.