



## PRIME MINISTER

MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP,  
TO THE BANKSIA ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION AWARDS 1992,  
MELBOURNE, ON WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY, 5 JUNE 1992

Welcome to this gathering on World Environment Day.

Today we might reflect on any number of environmental issues.

In 1992 the most important task is perhaps less one of recognising the challenge than arriving at an effective way of meeting it.

To do that we need to overcome the sort of polarisation which too often debilitates the debate.

No doubt there have been faults on all sides, but the first principle is protection.

It is no longer acceptable to cast those who believe in ecologically sustainable development and environmental protection as spoilers - opposed to everything, and without viable alternatives.

Sustainable development is a viable alternative - it may well be a viable imperative.

Those who are charged with being anti-jobs, because they want strict controls on pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, production and disposal of waste material, or certain development proposals controls, might well reply that they are in favour of a higher standard of living.

It is simply not a matter of jobs versus environment.

We do not need to lower our environmental standards to get greater economic growth.

As business is discovering, the environment is an economic growth area.

It is not a case of our being unable to afford to protect the environment. Rather, we cannot afford to degrade it.

This World Environment Day is an appropriate time to remind ourselves that our huge environmental losses in Australia have been economic losses, with economic costs.

For the benefit of this generation and those to come, we have to develop a new sense of common national purpose, a new willingness to work cooperatively towards national goals and national solutions.

There is no greater goal than developing a new relationship with the environment.

That, I think should be the message on this World Environment Day - that, and our congratulations to the winners of the Banksia Awards.

Thank you.