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## PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING, MP  
ADDRESS AT FORMAL MAORI WELCOMING CEREMONY, HOANI WAITITI  
MARAE, AUCKLAND, SATURDAY, 22 MAY 1993

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Can I thank you for the warmth of your welcome, for the welcome of your warriors, for the singing, of the women which was both moving, touching and most appreciated by me.

You welcome me as the Prime Minister of Australia, you pay in that case all Australians a tribute and let me return the tribute by saying that all Australians recognise the spirit of the Maori. I have always been impressed by the resilience and the strength of the Maori and the culture of the Maori.

It is these things we feel that do give, as your Minister has said, a distinguishing character to the country of New Zealand and I am particularly pleased to be here in this year - the Year of Indigenous People - when in this year those countries and those peoples which came to the new world disturbed of course the old world, the world of the people who were here first. And those things which Europeans and European settlers celebrate are often the tragic things, the periods of tragedy for the indigenous peoples of various countries - no less true of New Zealand and Australia.

But the Maori have in such strength of culture had such a dominating influence over the culture of New Zealand. And I am delighted that the education which you have here at this Marae is one where you have maintained your traditional cultures, you learn your traditional cultures, you take pride in your traditional cultures and you also teach your children about the society in which they live. This is I'm sure the most effective way of keeping those two cultures in the first sense alive and flourishing and beyond that weaving their pattern together.

In Australia, in this Year of Indigenous People, we too are I think finally coming to a basis of reconciliation with our indigenous people. And unlike the Maori there was no treaty, there was no equivalent to the Treaty of Waitangi. So the nation of Australia has sought to come to terms with our indigenous people and this year our High Court, the Supreme Court of our country has in fact last year made a very fundamental and historic decision to give recognition for the

first time that there was a native title in the common law of Australia before the settlement of Europeans.

This is a very significant decision and now the government of Australia and the governments of the States of Australia are now seeking to put into the body of law a native title for the indigenous people of Australia. This can and must be the first effective basis of reconciliation in our country between indigenous, the Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal Australians. This process of reconciliation as a nation we have dedicated ourself to and let me say it fills me with a certain sense of pride to see in this country such an outward and obvious pride in your culture - the culture of the Maori and the willingness of the New Zealand community to see this culture dominate in many respects its own national culture.

One thing that I think indigenous people understand that European people have never quite understood and that is the relationship between the people and the land. And your Mayor very eloquently said today that this is an environmental place, a place where the environment has a premium and we have much to learn from the indigenous peoples of our countries about the land. We are only now coming to understand what they know about the land and how they have preserved the land. Whereas as a culture we have been often the destroyers of the land. We now understand that is a mistake. We now understand the land needs respect and we understand that without the land having the respect it can't give to us the kind of life that could only come by a gentle, melding of the interests of the people and the land.

It may be that the environment is an issue amongst countries and peoples around the world, but it has always been an issue with indigenous people. This is another thing you have taught us.

So if we can learn this valuable lesson the futures of New Zealand and Australia - two great lands - will be different in the future than they have been in the immediate past because we have the opportunity to preserve our land and to rebuild the nature of our lands as many countries have now lost that opportunity and if we can learn that from the indigenous people of this country, you the Maori and from the Aboriginal people of Australia, our indigenous people, we will learn much.

The culture of our indigenous people, Aboriginal Australians is now substantially permeating the culture of Australia in its art, in its dance, in its music and we are in a sense in this last decade celebrating the renaissance of that culture within our own. And I'm sure as time goes on it to will start to play a much larger role in our general national culture as the Maori have played in New Zealand culture.

With all that said, indigenous people have since the time of European settlement rarely had justice and we know that we will never entirely live in peace or peace of heart without a true basis of reconciliation with indigenous people and that

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is why we must be one people. One people with an emphasis on different values, with loyalties perhaps to different cultures, but one people in New Zealand, one people in Australia and of course between us all Australasians. If we do that we would do well.

Could I thank you again for the warmth of your welcome to me and my party, to my wife. I think I have visited New Zealand properly too and I don't think I would have visited New Zealand without visiting the Marae and receiving its gracious and traditional welcome.

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