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PRIME MINISTER

125/93

DEATH OF JUSTIN O'BYRNE

It was with considerable sadness I learned today of the death of Justin O'Byrne, the former President of the Senate.

Justin O'Byrne was a remarkable Australian. A fighter pilot and a prisoner of war in World War II, he continued his service to the nation as Senator for Tasmania for the extraordinary period of 34 years, until 1981.

He had a typically Australian streak of larrikin in him, which threw into relief and made more effective his great commitment to social justice. Even before that phrase had been coined, Justin O'Byrne understood and gave voice to the principles which the term sums up.

His service as a Senator was capped by his election to the position of President, in which he served with vigour and distinction during the Whitlam Government, a challenging and tumultuous period for one in his position.

Justin O'Byrne's contributions to debate - inside and outside the Senate - were always lively, but he managed to attract friends wherever he went. We will all miss him now.

SYDNEY,
10 November, 1993