



## **PRIME MINISTER**

**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP  
AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL CAPITAL APPEAL  
THURSDAY, 25 AUGUST 1994**

When I launched the 'Australia Remembers' program here only last week I expressed my affection for this place and my high regard for the work that is done here.

For a long time now the Memorial has been the most visited museum or gallery in Australia. Attendances this year are booming. I understand that more than 900,000 people will visit this year. They come, I think, as Manning Clark once put it, 'to understand what it means to be Australian'.

This Memorial is a great national institution which touches the lives of millions of Australians - and we want to see it continue to grow.

It must never get out of touch with the times, or grow inward looking and parochial.

The message of the Memorial must remain powerful and persuasive from one generation to the next. Therefore its galleries are bound to need regular renovation and renewal.

I am pleased to say that over the last decade the Commonwealth government has played its part in seeing that we meet this responsibility.

The Memorial has a professional and well-qualified staff and a collection that is well-housed, well-documented and secure.

But a much greater challenge now presents itself. Over the next decade all of the Memorial's major galleries will be renewed in order to tell their stories coherently and comprehensively in a language that today's visitors - and tomorrow's - will understand.

The Memorial has embarked on an exciting and ambitious program and today I announce the launch of a Capital Appeal which aims to raise the necessary \$20 million over the next three to five years.

The Commonwealth Government has given the lead gift of \$2.5 million to renew the Pacific War Gallery. We announced this in the May Budget.

In addition the Budget also allowed for an increase of \$2 million annually to the Memorial's base funding.

This injection of funds will guarantee that the building is sound, that there is an adequate and qualified staff for the tasks ahead, and that the collection is properly managed and developed .

A great deal of work has gone into the preparations for the launch of this appeal.

In each state and territory the Memorial has established advisory groups made up of business and community leaders. These men and women are giving their time freely and generously and I thank them for that.

The first stage of the appeal is aimed at corporate Australia. Only in the second stage will the general public be called on for donations. I have no doubt that both stages will meet with a generous response.

In launching the appeal today I also invite state governments to demonstrate their support - perhaps by collectively matching the Commonwealth's gift of \$2.5 million.

While we cherish what has been achieved at the Memorial, we cannot fail to see what needs to be done.

This Pacific War Gallery is a perfect example of the story half told.

It was at Milne Bay and on the Kokoda Track that Australian troops turned back the Japanese. It was in the Pacific War that the battle for Australia was won.

The story of those battles and the spirit of the Australians who were engaged in them must be told here at the Australian War Memorial - and with government and public support it will be.

I congratulate the Council, the Director and his staff for deciding to embark upon the challenge of renewal, and all those who have worked so hard to establish this Capital Appeal.

I sincerely hope that state governments, business and the community at large will respond: and I am confident that they will because each year, by coming here in such numbers, they prove their affection for the Memorial and their respect for the Australian men and women whose great sacrifice is honoured here.

It is a great national cause, and it is with pleasure that I now launch it.

CANBERRA  
25 August 1994