



PRIME MINISTER

**ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP
OPENING OF THE THIRD RUNWAY AT SYDNEY AIRPORT
4 NOVEMBER 1994**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Well, today's a great day.

It's a great day for Sydney but it's also a great day for Australia.

The opening of this third runway means that we now have the sort of airport you'd expect in one of the great cities of the world.

It's the sort of airport worthy of a city, and a country, hosting the 2000 Olympics.

But perhaps more important, this third runway will create a huge number of jobs and deliver enormous benefits to the Australian community.

According to the Federal Airports Corporation, this runway will generate an additional 26,000 airport-related jobs in the next five years, and an additional one million jobs in the tourism industry over the next ten years.

I mean it's difficult to think of many projects that are going to generate these levels of employment.

On top of the jobs, there will also be major benefits to consumers be they business people or people on holidays.

And it won't be too long before they no longer have to factor in inordinate delays to their travel into and out of Sydney.

Of course, making this a world quality airport that will generate enormous benefits not just for Sydney but for the wider Australian community is something that's not without it's cost.

And, unfortunately, it's a cost that doesn't fall equally.

As we all know, there are a good number of people who live in the surrounding areas who will be adversely affected by noise.

For those people, we have put in place a \$183 million package of measures to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on the local community.

I might add that these measures aren't cosmetic - they go further than many similar programs at airports right around the world.

They acknowledge that the burden doesn't fall equally.

The noise control measures include

- . the voluntary acquisition of 112 properties in the area of highest noise exposure - the 40 Australian Noise Exposure (ANEF) contour
- . the insulation of schools, colleges, hospitals, churches, and child and health care facilities - the 25 to 40 ANEF contour based on the ultimate capacity of the airport
- . and the insulation of 3,500 residences - exposed to projected noise levels above 30 ANEF.

Further, there will also be a study to assess whether insulation should be put in residences exposed to lower levels of noise (below the 30 ANEF contour) and a pilot insulation scheme will be undertaken as a matter of priority.

This third runway is also a major accomplishment in construction and industrial relations.

Not only has the project involved the dredging of 14 million cubic metres of sand from Botany Bay, the reclamation of 170 hectares and the construction of 8.5 kilometres of taxiways, but it has all been achieved six months ahead of schedule and \$32 million under budget.

Further, because of a 'co-operative contracting approach' between the runway consortium and the Federal Airports Corporation, not one day has been lost to industrial action during the entire life of the project.

That's a great achievement and a tribute to both the workers and the management.

In constructing the runway, we haven't lost sight of environmental considerations.

To prevent silt fouling Botany Bay, a specially fabricated seven kilometre long 'turbidity barrier' has been built.

And it's the first time this technology has been used on a major project like this one.

In addition, 30 hectares of seagrass have been created in the embayment between the runways.

Of course, it's also important to see this third runway in the wider context of the Government's aviation policies to deliver a quality service to Australian consumers.

With this runway up and running, we can now rightly lay claim to having a robust, integrated and internationally competitive aviation industry – one that has decreased average air fares by 22 per cent since 1990 and has increased passenger numbers by 58 per cent on our most important routes.

But the reform needs to continue and that's why the Government has moved to lease all FAC Airports and Sydney West airport at Badgerys Creek.

At its heart, this decision reflects the need to improve the efficiency of airport investments and operations.

It should lead to Australia having one of the most innovative private airport industries in the world.

All up these reforms, coupled with the construction of this third runway will deliver enormous benefits to tens of thousands of Australians both in terms of jobs and additional business.

Today is a major step forward for the Australian aviation industry.

And it's the sort of step we have to take if we are to ensure that 21st Century Australia is the best place in the world to live and do business.

Congratulations to all involved in the completion of this critical piece of national infrastructure.

Thank you.