PRIME MINISTER

17/96

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, MP
FUNDING FOR QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, LAUNCESTON

I am delighted to announce that the Government will provide $1.15 million over the next three years($350,000 per year) to assist in the exhibition and conservation program of Launceston's Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery.

This will be a partnership project with the National Museum of Australia, assisting in sharing of expertise and resources, and providing links to increase the national profile of the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. It flows from the Government's commitment to support regional museums through the National Museum's Regional Access Program.

The Government believes that the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery has the potential to become a cultural institution of outstanding national significance, in addition to its role as a catalyst in the intellectual and cultural life of Launceston and Tasmania.

Of particular importance is the re-development by the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery of the adjacent Launceston railway yards as one of the most important industrial heritage sites in Australia. The active exhibition program and conservation workshop planned for the site will expand on the theme of innovation, creativity and achievement, linking the successes of the past with current developments and experiences, in the arts, sciences and other areas.

On 25 January 1996, the Government announced a program of additional funding for the National Museum of Australia to develop State and regional partnership projects, to increase travelling exhibitions and to produce on-line cultural material.

While the National Museum has worked closely with other regional and State Museums, Launceston's will be the first partnership project under the new program. This recognises the importance of the Queen Victoria Museum's collection, its commitment to community and regional history and the national significance of the Launceston railway yards project.