



# PRIME MINISTER

14 August 1996

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
THE HON. JOHN HOWARD  
SPEECH AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE  
REPORT OF THE CANBERRA COMMISSION, SYDNEY**

**E & OE.....**

Mr Butler, Professor, lady and gentlemen of the Commission, may I briefly thank you very warmly for a number of things. I thank all of you very warmly for the great commitment of time and intellect and resolve that you have committed to this exercise. It was inaugurated under the previous government. Let me say that a world free of the threat of nuclear destruction is not only a common goal of both sides of politics in Australia but it's a common goal of mankind around the world and to the extent that the work of this Commission has contributed in a practical way to taking us further along the path towards that goal, then it is something that men and women of goodwill all around the world, irrespective of their politics and irrespective of their background should warm towards and feel enthusiastic about.

I must say that meeting all of you, some for the first time, others not for the first time because we've met in different capacities, meeting all of you collectively this morning is a reminder of just what a diverse group you really are, and it is quite an achievement given the different backgrounds that you come from, it is an achievement to have presented a unanimous report. I know Foreign Minister, Mr Downer will be going into more detail at a news conference later about the report and the way in which it will be handled by the Government. Let me tell you that we are grateful for the work that you have done. The report will be treated seriously. The balance that you have struck between idealism and pragmatism is the alluring goal of statesmen all around the world and to the extent that you can strike that balance in whatever you do or whatever we do is a very considerable achievement.

The debate about nuclear weapons in Australia last year was very intense. The feeling was right across party lines. It cut a swathe through the normal divide in our community on other issues. There was a common feeling that we had reached the

stage in the history of the world where we might look forward to a lot more stability and a lot more hope in that area, and to the extent that your work has contributed to that, you've not only done a service to Australia and a complement, paid a complement to Australia but also to the aspirations of people around the world. So to you Sir, and to all of the members of the Commission, can I on behalf of the Australian Government thank you. I want I think to speak on behalf of both sides of politics in Australia in expressing that thanks because it was an enterprise embarked upon by the predecessor government but it's something that as far as the goal is concerned is a common goal and not the subject of political bartering or point scoring, so I thank you and I know that the work of the Commission will be looked at very carefully and the report will be studied, and I hope you enjoy the glorious Sydney weather.

You've come at a remarkably attractive time of the year and we have a few other festivities in the city today associated with another recent enterprise and I hope you can share some of that festivity and conviviality, so thank you very much Professor. You've done us a great complement and I warmly thank all of you for the commitment of time and energy and intellect to such an important objective.

Thank you