



PRIME MINISTER

30 October 1996

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER
THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP
PRESENTATION OF AUSTRALIAN VIOLENCE PREVENTION
AWARDS TO THE PRIME MINISTER
AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL
PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA**

E&OE

Thank you very much Dr Graycar, Daryl Williams the Attorney General and Minister for Justice, ladies and gentlemen. Can I say how touched I am to receive this award. The proudest thing my Government has achieved over the last seven and a half months is undoubtedly that of uniform gun control laws throughout Australia. If I were asked to nominate something that we have done that has contributed more dramatically than anything else towards making Australia a better country for all of its citizens, I would unhesitatingly nominate what was achieved in relation to gun controls.

I want to acknowledge the contribution of Daryl Williams as the Attorney-General and the Chairman of the Australasian Police Ministers' Conference. I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Beazley, the Leader of the Australian Democrats, Senator Kernot, and the Premiers of the various States and the Chief Ministers of the two territories for the cooperation and support that they gave. It would have been a lot harder if bipartisan support had not been available. Violence offends our notions of a civilised society. Violence threatens the enjoyment of life. Violence in the home, in the workplace, in the streets, anywhere in Australia is something that is utterly alien to the sort of people we are and the sort of people we want to remain.

Something like one in four of all murders involve firearms. One in five suicides involve firearms. There is an undeniable link between the availability of firearms and the ease and the level of homicide in our community. One only has to look at the appalling murder rates of the United States to understand that reality. And what we decided together some

months ago was to achieve a decisive cultural change in Australia because that is what the agreement of the Police Ministers represented. And it did send a message of hope and encouragement to the whole of the Australian community that if people in authority work together, have the will and the commitment, great things can be achieved.

So I'm honoured, Dr Graycar, to have received the award. It was an immense achievement, it was something of great personal satisfaction and I am very happy, indeed, that in a small way our actions have contributed towards making Australia a better, a happier and a safer place for all of us.

Thank you.