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PRIME MINISTER

30 October 1996

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER
THE HON. JOHN HOWARD MP
ADDRESS TO THE ETHNIC SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS
BRISBANE**

E&OE.....

Thank you very much Mary; to Mr Don Argus, the Managing Director; the National Bank of Australia; other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. It really is a delight for me to be here tonight and I thank you for asking me along. Whenever you sit down and try and think about the history of our country, particularly but not only the post World War II history of Australia, many chapters of that history comprise the heroic contributions of people who chose to live in Australia from other parts of the world.

It's not possible to think of the economic growth of Australia over the last 30 or 40 years, without thinking of the massive contributions that have been made by the group loosely called 'ethnic Australians' to the development of our country.

First of course it was the many groups who came from eastern and central and southern and northern Europe, they made their special contributions. It's not possible to think of business development in so many areas without thinking of the Italians and the Greeks, to think of the contribution in areas such as property development and so many others by the East Europeans and so the story goes on. And there are many heroic stories of people arriving here with virtually nothing by way of resources except a determination to make a new life and to make a happy life for them and their families and to make a contribution to Australia. And in more recent years, we have experienced the extraordinary entrepreneurial injection of people from the Asia-Pacific region. The Chinese, people from Malaysia, people from all over that region, they've all made an enormous contribution to building our country.

And of course they bring a special value at the present time, the cultural diversity of so much of the business community of Australia is an indispensable element in winning new markets for us, particularly but not only in our own region. If you have the

knowledge, if you have the language, you have the cultural sensitivity, you have the understanding of a region then you have a capacity to do something that the rest of us can't do.

So I think what I want to do tonight is I want to salute the business acumen, the entrepreneurial flair. As many of you know, I am quite a fanatic about the role of small business in Australia and you can't think of small business in Australia without thinking of the contribution of ethnic Australians, and of course it is not only in small business but it is also in medium and large sized businesses.

So can I just say a very simple thank you on behalf of all of your fellow Australians for what you have done before us and what we together have done over such a long period of time. You are a rich, indispensable, invaluable part of the fabric of our country and we are very grateful for your contribution. We salute your business achievements. I congratulate the National Australia Bank on its continued sponsorship of these very very important awards. They are a very appropriate and necessary honouring of the contribution of a group of people to the life and economic experience of our nation that is quite indispensable.

Thank you.