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PRIME MINISTER

25 January 1997

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER
THE HON. JOHN HOWARD MP
SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE ELECTORATE OFFICE OF
TRISH WORTH MP, FEDERAL MEMBER FOR ADELAIDE**

E & OE.....

Thank you very much Trish. To Martin Cameron, the President of the Liberal Party in South Australia, to Amanda Vanstone, Robert Hill, Ian McLachlan, my other state and Federal Parliamentary colleagues, ladies and gentlemen. I have reflected on a number of the resonances with a year ago as I travelled here this morning the short distance from the hotel. It was exactly a year ago that I opened that campaign office. It was about the same time that I think I opened a campaign office for Andrew Southcon. I remember to the day of course as so many of us do, the Saturday of the Australia Day weekend last year, when the election was called and can I say, Trish that it's always a pleasure to be in Adelaide about this time of the year and it was very nice of you to give me the opportunity of saying a few words at the opening of your office.

We are on the eve of Australia Day, a day that has grown in the affections and the commitment of Australians to celebrate over the last ten or 20 years. When I was growing up people sort of struggled to celebrate Australia Day. It was called Anniversary Day I think then. It certainly was in Sydney, and I guess it was the same all around Australia. And we sort of went through the motions of celebrating Australia Day but over the years, and particularly over the last decade, the celebration of it has become a focal point of people thinking about and reflecting on those things that bind us together. One of the credos that I have always tried to live by in political life, both inside my own party and also within the community is that we ought to focus more on the things that bind us together rather than on the things that might push us apart.

And one of the most visible demonstrations, the most powerful pieces of evidence of the success of Australia will be that tomorrow, around our country thousands upon thousands

of people will become Australian citizens. They will come from literally the four corners of the Earth. They will pledge themselves to put the interests of Australia against the interests of any other country, not in the sense of repudiating the countries from which they have come but in the sense of embracing an overarching commitment in common with those who are already Australian citizens, to the future of our country and to the values that we share in common. And it's a very powerful reminder that that great act across the country, it's a very powerful reminder of what a magnet of tolerance this country is to people from so many parts of the world. And it cuts through the clatter, it cuts through the negativism, it cuts through the tendency of some Australians to see this country as other than a very robust, democratic, open, tolerant and diverse community. I think it is a source of tremendous pride to all Australians, whether they were born in this country or whether they have become Australians by choice, it is a reminder to all of us of just how high in the esteem of the rest of the world our country stands in terms of the values that men and women around the world regard as important.

Over the Christmas holiday period I always try and read some books and I read a very densely, and I don't mean dense in a pejorative sense but dense in terms of size, history of what was called the short 20th century, it was called 'The Age of Extremes' and it traces the history of the 20th century from the beginning of the Great War of 1914 to the collapse of communism in the early 1990s. And it contains right in the middle of it a reminder that only eight countries, if you count separately Ireland and the United Kingdom, only eight countries have been continuously democratic during that period and Australia is one of those eight countries, the others being of course the United States, New Zealand, Canada, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Switzerland. Now many countries of course lost their democracy and their freedom not through choice but because of the invasion of others and that should always be kept in mind. But it is a reminder to all of us of just how successful Australia has really been. And the greatest measure of somebody's esteem in the community is what others think of him or her and the greatest mark of the esteem of the nation in the eyes of the rest of the world is what the citizens of other countries think of that nation, and the desire of so many people to become citizens of this country and the willingness of them to do so is a very powerful reminder to all of us of what this country has achieved and what it really stands for.

Irish, can I say on a more personal note that I have a very strong affinity with the electorate of Adelaide. I have experienced some ins and outs I have got to say in recent years, I am delighted to say a lot more ins than outs. I think your achievement in winning the electorate of Adelaide in the first place was a remarkable tribute to your campaigning skills, it really was. And the service that you have given to this very diverse electorate, it is an electorate that of course embraces the heart of the city of Adelaide, it is an electorate that straddles a very wide group of socio-economically speaking, of Australians. It includes amongst its constituents people of very diverse backgrounds, it has a very important educational base. It has one of the most important sporting bases of course, both summer and winter sports, of any city in Australia and you represent it magnificently and your achievement in increasing your majority at the last election and the work that you do as a Member of Parliament, the contribution you make to the

understanding of some of the everyday problems of life is a very, very good example to your colleagues.

One of my best recollections of Trish and a demonstration of the sort of person she really is was the day of that quite disgraceful attack on Parliament on the 19th of August, and after the demonstrators had been, shall we say, I say it quite unashamedly, repulsed by the police who behaved in an absolutely magnificent way, and other security people, in a very difficult situation. I went around as soon as possible to inspect the damage and there was Trish resuming her profession for the moment of nursing and caring for one of the police officers who had been assaulted by several of the demonstrators. And that is typical of the caring role that she plays out, both as a Member of Parliament and as a member of the community. It was a vivid reminder of the kind of person she is and the fact that she's never forgotten that she has a caring role in the community as a citizen and her training as a nurse was very much in evidence on that occasion.

This office will be of course open and will be a vehicle of support for all of the citizens of the electorate of Adelaide. Although in the nature of politics only slightly over half, or in some electorates, immensely over half of the community votes for you, once you're a Member of Parliament you have an obligation and a commitment to serve the people who voted against you as well as the people who voted for you. And I know that Trish will do that and I know that anybody, irrespective of their politics, who comes to this office can be assured of a good hearing, can be assured of a persistent effort to help them in solving whatever problem that they might have and I think that it is appropriate that there are so many community leaders here.

So ladies and gentlemen, as I reflect on the last year I do so as leader of the Liberal Party with very great pride at what has been achieved, not in any triumphal sense. We were given the great privilege of being the Government of Australia. We have worked very hard and I have been very ably assisted as Prime Minister in a very, very powerful Ministerial and Parliamentary contingent from South Australia. I think I have said before that I can't recall in the history of Federation, certainly not in the post-war period, where there have been four Cabinet Ministers in the Government of this country from South Australia, which is the case at the present time and they are ably surrounded by a very powerful contingent of very hard-working Senators and Members, and I am delighted to say at the opening of this office how much I appreciate the contribution of South Australians to my Government and to the Parliament generally. It has been a very exciting year since I was last here. It's almost a year since the change of Government. We have achieved a lot but we have many challenges ahead of us and the new year has brought a number of reminders of continuing challenges. The new year has also brought some new challenges which will engage the energies and the goodwill and the commitment and the application of all of us.

But ladies and gentlemen, I am here today to, with great pleasure, to declare Trish's new electorate office open, to wish her well, to thank her for the care that she gives to the people of Adelaide, to thank her for being such a magnificent member of our Parliamentary team and to wish her many, many years of service to the cause of the people of Adelaide and to the Australian community generally.

Thank you.

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