



**18 April 1997**

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
THE HON. JOHN HOWARD MP  
SPEECH TO THE HUNTER VALLEY WINE ASSOCIATION  
THANKSGIVING DINNER, POKOLBIN**

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

Thank you very much Mr Barnes. To our host and hostess, to Brian and Fay McGuigan, to that great Liberal colleague of mine, Bob Baldwin, the Member for Paterson, come on, give him a clap, and to many other distinguished guests and very great and famous names in the wine industry of Australia and can I particularly acknowledge the presence of Len Evans who I have known, I have known Evans for years and like so many people who have spent most of their working life in the city of Sydney, some people who live in Canberra at the moment complain that I still spend too much of my working life in Sydney. They say I should spend more of it in Canberra but I think the people of Sydney think otherwise. I have enjoyed the hospitality of Len at the Bulletin place and it's terrific to see he and his wife, Tricia here and to know what a tremendous life they've made for themselves here in the Hunter over the last ten years.

Can I say, this is an enormously relaxing way to end a week where one or two things happened. I can almost say a "Wik" in which one or two things happened but I can assure you that sort of hasn't flickered out yet. We're still working very hard at it but it really is a great escape to come here to celebrate the end of the harvest, to congratulate you on the tremendous contribution that you are making to the Australian economy, to say what marvellous economic conditions the new Government has created for such a great industry, to extol the virtues of a stable taxation system, predictable taxation system, and really I guess share with all of you as Australians the national champion that the wine industry of Australia has now become.

We hear a lot about national champions. We hear the banks saying they want to be national champions. We hear some people in the media saying they want to be national champions but I think the great national champion of the last few years of the Australian export industry has in fact been the wine industry of this country, it really has. The way in which it's all changed, the way in which you've been able to penetrate

markets that were regarded only 10 or 15 years ago was absolutely beyond the call as far as the Australian wine industry is concerned is quite remarkable and the way in which here in the Hunter you have combined not only a great industry that delivers enormous pleasure and relaxation and congeniality to so many Australians but also the way in which you've generated a tremendous tourist industry and also I hope preserved some of the special rural and provincial character of the district has really been quite remarkable.

I must say that I was struck through the introduction with the cricketing analogy. Of course that was obviously tailored, it was obviously tailored to sort of touch the heart of somebody like myself who is quite a lover of that game and I was saying to Tricia Evans that the most memorable luncheon I have ever had in my life was a luncheon I had in Adelaide about five years ago with the late Max Schubert when he was still very much with us, thank God, Sir Donald Bradman, and it was an extraordinary privilege to spend a couple of hours with those two giants of their respective ways of life and their respective achievements and it was just a very humbling reminder of the massive achievements and the massive talents of so many of our fellow Australians.

So I want to thank all of you for the contribution that you are making to our country. I want to congratulate all of you for the sheer excellence and quality. One of the great experiences you have now, you can go anywhere in the world now and people speak admiringly of the quality of Australian wine and this is something that I must say of Prime Minister of Australia, somebody who has the opportunity on occasions of representing our great nation abroad. The sheer kick that I get out of people saying how wonderful Australian wine is and the awe in which it is held, the quality, the consistency of the quality of Australian wine, the fact that there is a uniformity and quality about it which is quite extraordinary given the size of our country, and I think it is something that gives tremendous pride and tremendous pleasure to me, it gives tremendous enjoyment and pride and pleasure to me also and to the other, just about all of the other 18 million Australians.

So you deserve to have a good time tonight. Thank you for the contribution that you are making to Australia. Congratulations on your domestic achievement. To Brian and Fay, thank you very much and can I say to Fay, I recently appointed her to the Prime Minister's Supermarket to Asia Council and she's doing an absolutely fabulous job on that Council in helping to build up our export performance and our export potential into Asia. You are one of the great success stories of this country's wine industry and Janette and I are absolutely delighted to be amongst you here in the fabulous Hunter Valley.

Thank you.