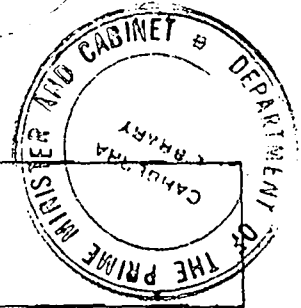




47



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH AT BARUNGA SPORTS AND CULTURAL
FESTIVAL, NORTHERN TERRITORY - 12 JUNE 1988

E & O E - PROOF ONLY

Traditional owners of Barunga, ... traditional owners from throughout the Northern Territory and those from South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland who are present with us today, Chairman, the Northern Territory Land Council, all Aboriginal people from elsewhere in Australia, my friend and colleague the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gerry Hand, and friends one and all.

Could I say to you on behalf of Hazel and myself how thrilled we are to be with you today. I want to thank everyone who in any way has been responsible for the organisation of this welcome and for the ... which you have presented to us. To anyone who in any way has been responsible for today, our heart-felt thanks.

As you know 1988 is a special year in Australia. I hope that you will understand that before this year arrived I had been trying to make all Australians understand that the 200 years that are being talked about in this bicentenary year, I've asked all Australians to understand that those 200 years which come on top of 40,000 years of Aboriginal culture, traditions and civilisation, that it is the Aboriginal people who were the prior occupiers and owners of this land. You were the people who for 40,000 years have cared for this land and it's only if we understand that that we are entitled in any way to have these celebrations in 1988.

It's because I see now the signs that are strongly emerging of the preparedness on the part of Aboriginal people and of non-Aboriginal people to start to talk sensibly about these things that I am so happy. I want, in front of all of you if I may, to pay a particular tribute to Gerry Hand, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, who I think more than anyone in non-Aboriginal Australia has taken the initiative to make these processes possible.

What we have witnessed here today has been historic for two reasons. Firstly you have given us the opportunity of seeing the survival and the renewal of your great traditions and we thank you for the way in which you have allowed them to survive and ensured that they will. But the second thing that we have seen today is, I believe, truly historic. I have had the opportunity as you'll have witnessed to sit there with your leaders and they have put to me proposals with which I have been able to agree.

- 2 -

Those proposals that they have put and with which I have agreed are these. Firstly, that there shall be a treaty negotiated between the Aboriginal people and the Government on behalf of all the people of Australia. Secondly, that the next step is that you the Aboriginal people should decide what it is that you want to see in that treaty. The third step is that I have agreed that we should provide you with assistance to establish those consultation processes and in particular that there should be a committee of seven of your traditional elders who will have the responsibility for organising those consultations with the view to organising at the end of the consultations an Australia-wide convention which will represent the culmination of your own negotiations and discussions. Fourthly, that when you have conducted these processes of consultation that we as a government should then be prepared to receive and to consider the results of your thinking and your consultation. And fifthly, that we agreed that these processes should start before the end of this year and that we would expect and hope and work for the conclusion of such a treaty before the end of the life of this Parliament.

Those are the five considerations that your elders put to me and to which I agreed. So now what we expect to happen is that on your part, as I on behalf of the Government, having agreed that you will now start these processes of talking amongst yourselves under the leadership of that committee of seven of your elders, to work out just what it is that you want to see. As you do that I give you the commitment of the preparedness, the willingness, the desire of my Government to respond positively.

At the end of this process when these things are done my fervent wish that I expressed, as you'll recall last year, my fervent wish is that at the end of that process a position will have been reached in which the non-Aboriginal people of Australia will recognise the injustices of the past, will recognise the obligations that we have to create an Australia in which your culture and traditions will not only be able to survive but to flourish, in which you the Aboriginal people will have the opportunity of living in dignity, living in an environment in which you will have the opportunity for self-management, in which your law and tribal customs will be able to apply to the maximum possible extent, that these things will be done, that you will have that sort of Australia in which to live and that you on your part will accept then that Australia has accepted and will continue to discharge its commitment.

When those things are done, when that agreement can culminate in that treaty, compact - call it as we will decide - that then after this 200 years that truly we will have an Australia within which the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal Australia will be able to live together truly in peace and in dignity in the situation in which we will respect one another and in an Australia in which you and all other Australians will be able to live the life that you desire.

- 3 -

It's been too long, far too long in achieving or even being able to think that we will reach that position and I do truly believe that as a result of what's been happening recently, and a large part of what we've been able to do today it's my belief that really now for the first time we can expect that sort of outcome to which I have referred.

So to all of you that had any part in creating this positive atmosphere in which we can expect this outcome, I repeat my thanks and deep gratitude and give you my commitment, the commitment of my government and certainly the commitment of my minister that we will now stand ready to respond to these processes to which we have agreed today.

Finally, on behalf of Hazel and myself I thank you for the paintings and the other gifts that you've given to us today. We will take them back to Canberra with us and they will serve to remind me and Hazel, not only for the time that we're in government but for the rest of our lives, of a day that will always be in our memories. Thank you.

ends

TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH BY GALARRWUY YUNUPINGU, CHAIRMAN, CENTRAL
LAND COUNCIL, 12 JUNE 1988

E & O E - PROOF ONLY

I can see some smiles in the faces which is very much encouragement to all of us and I think to talk about after those statements that the PM has made it is something that we wanted to hear particularly at this gathering.

PM does not know that the presentation hasn't ended yet so we will give him another surprise. And this surprise is one very important as a reminder to the PM and his Government and as a reminder to any other government who will take power of this country. That it will be something, something to remind any government who will run in its power to change policies and constitutions that Aboriginal people will always be in front of their policy making and decision making that we are people to this country, that the notice that we will present to the Prime Minister now will remind, not only Bob Hawke, but the next one after him and the next one after him and the next one after him and the next one after him and we can count that for another twenty to a hundred years. And after and more after and forever. This is the country we are talking about, the country of Australia and if that is the case you are now witnessing the people who express their desire of ownership and belongingness, that we are part of it. We always will be as we, in this celebration of the Bicentennial year, we do want to celebrate the way it is being celebrated this year, but separately. Let's celebrate the next 200 years of Australia jointly and if that statement will go and last for the next 200 years let's achieve it now. And I'll stop there because somebody with big ears and televisions and radios, they are all over the place here, might twist my political statements and make it as a political nonsense. But if that is the case let them make their own statements, let them run it, but let's run it if there's a media in the crowd please make it right. Make it right that we have been waiting for the day that has happened now.

(tape break)

... a petition that unites Aboriginal people throughout Australia. That this petition will be presented to the Commonwealth Government of Australia while Bob Hawke is the Prime Minister and pass it on to the next one and the next one and the next one and the next one and the next one and the next one. And I will make him responsible that he will honour that this petition will greet this brand new Parliament House of Australia, not forgetting and leaving Aboriginal people right out of what Australia is all about.

Thank you.

ends