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Title:

Speech Opening Aboriginal Art Exhibition, Western Teachers College

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN, OPENING ABORIGINAL ART
EXHIBITION. WESTERN TEACHERS COLLEGE, 5.12.72

JUDGE ROPER, MR. MORLEY, MRS. ELPHICK, MRS. HAMMOND, LADIES
AND GENTLEMEN:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ASKING ME TO OPEN THIS MOST IMPRESSIVE
AND STIMULATING EXHIBITION.

IT'S ONE OF THE FINEST PROOFS I'VE SEEN THAT ABORIGINAL CULTURE
NOT ONLY DRAWS ON A GREAT HERITAGE BUT IS ALSO A RICH AND
LIVING ONE.

EVERY ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO IT MERITS
CONGRATULATION. BUT I'M SURE I SPEAK FOR EVERYBODY IN THIS ROOM
WHEN I SAY THAT SPECIAL PRAISE SHOULD GO TO JOHN MORLEY AND
GLADYS ELPHICK FOR THEIR WORK IN ORGANISING AND ASSEMBLING IT.

2.

JOHN MORLEY'S LONG ASSOCIATION WITH THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF
THIS STATE IS AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF THE EFFECT THAT THE
DEDICATION AND INSPIRATION OF ONE MAN CAN HAVE ON A COMMUNITY.
AND BY THAT I DON'T MEAN THE ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY ALONE. ALL
SOUTH AUSTRALIANS HAVE BENEFITED FROM HIS WORK.

GLADYS ELPHICK IS ONE OF THE BEST ABORIGINAL LEADERS IN THIS
COUNTRY. HER PARTICULAR BLEND OF CHARM, VIGOROUS LEADERSHIP AND
SHEER HARD WORK ARE OF VERY GREAT VALUE - AS I WELL KNOW PERSONALLY -
TO THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE OF THIS STATE.

BOTH OF THEM ARE ALSO VERY MODEST PEOPLE SO I WON'T SAY ALL THE
OTHER THINGS THAT COULD BE SAID AND, ANYWAY, THE EXHIBITION
ITSELF IS TESTIMONY OF THEIR GREAT COMMUNITY SERVICE.

IT'S OBVIOUS FROM ONLY A GLANCE AT THE DISPLAYS HERE TONIGHT
THAT THERE IS A VERY LARGE POOL OF TALENT IN OUR ABORIGINAL
COMMUNITY AND THAT IT IS DEVELOPING IN EXCITING WAYS.

3.

ONE OF THE BEST ASPECTS OF IT, I THINK, IS THE WAY IN WHICH THE MAKING OF THE WORKS OF ART ON DISPLAY HAS BROUGHT PEOPLE TOGETHER AND INVOLVED THEM IN GROUP ACTIVITY THAT HAS BEEN FUN AS WELL AS REWARDING.

IT'S ALL THE MORE REMARKABLE AS AN ACHIEVEMENT WHEN ONE REMEMBERS THAT IT IS THE WORK OF PEOPLE WHO CONTINUE TO SUFFER FROM DISABILITIES THAT ARE NOT OF THEIR MAKING.

TRUE, OUR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE HAVE A LOT GOING FOR THEM - REDISCOVERED PRIDE IN THEIR HERITAGE, TALENT AND A SENSE OF COMMUNITY.

THEY NEED ALL THESE THINGS! THE LOT OF THE ABORIGINAL CITIZENS OF THIS NATION IS A NATIONAL SCANDAL. NO OTHER GROUP IN AUSTRALIA HAS TO CONTEND WITH THE LEGACY OF NEGLECT, POVERTY AND DEPRIVATION THAT THEY DO. OR TO PUT UP WITH THE CONTINUING RESULTS OF IT.

4.

IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, I THINK WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO DO MORE TO OVERCOME THIS LEGACY OF SHAME THAN OTHER PARTS OF AUSTRALIA, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF LAND RIGHTS AND DISCRIMINATION.

BUT THERE'S STILL MUCH, MUCH MORE THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE. ABOVE ALL, WE NEED MONEY IF WE ARE TO TACKLE THE PROBLEMS OF HOUSING, HEALTH AND EDUCATION ON THE SCALE REQUIRED.

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MADE ME HAPPIEST THIS WEEK ABOUT GOUGH WHITLAM'S ELECTION VICTORY IS THAT IT MEANS NEW HOPE FOR THE ABORIGINAL CITIZEN.

IT MEANS WE SHALL SOON GET HARD CASH INSTEAD OF PIOUS WORDS TO GIVE THE ABORIGINAL PEOPLE THE CHANCE SO LONG OVERDUE TO ACHIEVE DIGNITY AND EQUAL STATUS WITH WHITE AUSTRALIA.

AGAIN, MY MOST SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS TO THE ARTISTS AND ORGANISERS WHO HAVE MADE THIS EXHIBITION POSSIBLE. I HOPE IT WILL BE CROWDED OUT WITH PEOPLE COMING TO SEE THE WORK OF A VERY TALENTED GROUP OF AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS WORKING IN A TRADITION THAT IS AS DISTINCTIVE AS IT IS ENRICHING.

I HAVE VERY MUCH PLEASURE IN OFFICIALLY DECLARING IT OPEN.

THANK YOU.