

D. McClelland

21/12



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

Ack/ 11 December 1989

I attach a copy of a letter I have received from Mr. Douglas McClelland.

I should be grateful if you could provide advice and a draft reply, to reach me by Thursday 21 December please.

(C. D. POWELL)

R. N. Peirce, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

129/12
AUSTRALIA HOUSE
STRAND
LONDON WC2B 4LA
01-438 6220

7 December 1989

Mr Charles Powell
Private Secretary
Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1

Dear Charles

Following our recent telephone conversation about the possibility of the Premier of New South Wales, Mr Nick Greiner, meeting with the British Prime Minister on Saturday 16 November in London, I conveyed to Mr Norman Brunson, the Agent General for New South Wales, Mrs Thatcher's message that it was not possible to arrange a meeting on this occasion because she was out of London on that day, but she had expressed the hope that there may be the opportunity on a subsequent visit.

Mr Brunson has now advised me that Premier Greiner will be here in early June 1990 on an official visit to promote New South Wales. I understand there will be a seminar on Tuesday 5 June, to be followed by a formal dinner that evening hosted by the Premier.

Mr Greiner, through his Agent General in London, has asked me, as the Australian High Commissioner, to extend a warm invitation to Mrs Thatcher and Dennis to be the guests of honour at the official dinner and for the Prime Minister to address the gathering, comprising a large number of prominent businessmen in the City, and I now have the greatest of pleasure in so doing. If they can accept we would be delighted. I assure you that both will receive a hearty Australian welcome.

The venue for the dinner has yet to be determined but presently it is hoped it might be able to be held at the Clothworkers Livery Hall where, of course, there is a close relationship with Australia.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Warmest personal regards,
Yours sincerely

Doug McClelland
(Douglas McClelland)

CONFIDENTIAL

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
SOUTH PACIFIC DEPARTMENT
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AUSTRALIA: IMAGE AND REALITY

THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER AT CANBERRA TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

SUMMARY

AUSTRALIA: IMAGE AND REALITY

1. Australian society is changing rapidly. Is Australian confidence in its superiority well-based? (Paragraphs 1 - 6)
2. The elements of the Australian myth (Paragraph 7) contrasted with the reality.
3. The political system provides genuine democracy but Australia is over-governed. Serious corruption and/or maladministration in state governments. (Paragraphs 9 - 12)
4. The country of the "fair go" may be becoming less fair. The land of "mateship" has its class distinctions. (Paragraphs 13 - 16)
5. Modern Australia is a suburban society with developing inner-city and environmental problems. (Paragraphs 17 - 23). The institution of the family is breaking down. (Paragraph 25)
6. The changing racial composition of Australia is challenging Australian toleration. But the record of absorbing immigrants is impressive. (Paragraphs 26 - 30)
7. The foreign media's image of Australia is defective. Cultural achievement too little recognised. (Paragraph 31)
8. In protecting our interests we must depend less on sentimental ties, more on recognising the modern and rapidly changing Australia for what it really is. The techniques we apply to other foreign countries are just as relevant to Australia. (Paragraphs 32 & 33)

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BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION
CANBERRA

5 December 1989

The Rt Hon Douglas Hurd CBE MP
LONDON

Sir

AUSTRALIA: IMAGE AND REALITY

1. Her Majesty's Government have invested much effort in the last two years in rejuvenating and redefining Britain's relationship with Australia. Both countries recognised that the effort was overdue. Both, I believe, consider that it has so far succeeded. Following the recent exchange of Prime Ministerial visits and many other Ministerial exchanges there is now a good, working political relationship. Government efforts have made a useful contribution to the rapid expansion of the trade and investment relationship. There has been a satisfactory growth in new schemes of educational and scientific collaboration and in academic and youth exchanges.

2. Britain's extensive interests in Australia are now more clearly seen. British firms have invested more money in Australia than in any other country except the United States. Our balance of visible and invisible trade with Australia is more favourable than with any other country except America. Australia is a significant and growing investor in the United Kingdom, attracted by its advantages as a base for expansion into the Single European Market. British industry is increasingly using Australia as a means of entry into Pacific

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Rim markets. Diplomatically, the need to keep close to a like-minded country which is so initiative-prone as this one is self-evident. The existence in Australia of over 2 million persons entitled to British passports and, in the United Kingdom, of some 8 million people with relatives in Australia represents an extraordinary richness of personal ties.

3. Australian society is changing rapidly. In order to protect and advance our substantial interests we need to be as aware of the nature of that society as we are of the societies of our European, North American and other allies. But somehow that knowledge does not come so easily in the case of Australia. The British media show little interest in the real problems of this country. Australian writers are not often read in Britain. It is more comfortable and less taxing to assume that Australia is much as it always was and really rather similar to our own country. But the modern Australia is in truth very far removed from the one which sent its troops to fight alongside ours in two World Wars, very different too, from the country portrayed by expatriate Australian comedians or even by "Crocodile Dundee". Nor is Australia quite what many contemporary Australians would have us believe.

The Social Experiment

4. Since the original convict settlement in 1788 inward migration has always been an important determinant of the character of Australian society. Millions of people over the years have come here from the United Kingdom and other European countries, and some Arab and Asian countries. The majority judged that they could achieve a better life for themselves or their families in Australia than by staying in their countries of origin. Economic prospects, quality of life considerations, freedom from political oppression, all played their part. And from early days foreign observers saw Australia as an interesting social experiment. Would a society evolve which avoided the less desirable features of the older industrialised countries of Europe (in particular) but which adopted their more attractive accomplishments?

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5. Some immigrants decided, and still do decide, that they were mistaken and return to their countries of birth. The great majority stay in Australia. Most Australians state that they prefer their life in this continent to that which they see or learn of in other industrialised countries. The strength with which many assert this sometimes arouses the suspicion that they are engaged as much in convincing themselves as others. But it is impossible to doubt that the confidence of most Australians in the superiority of their own way of life is genuine. The question that this despatch attempts to answer is - is that confidence well-based?

The Image

6. All countries have their myths. The Australian myth is that this is the land of opportunity, the land where the class system of Britain and elsewhere does not exist, where no person is better than the next, where everyone is entitled to "a fair go", where the "battler", given a modicum of luck, can achieve the good life and rise to whatever position his talents entitle him. The famous description of Australia, the "Lucky Country", is interpreted by some to mean that it is so rich in natural resources that, however serious economic problems may seem at any given moment, the wheel of fortune will turn and "she'll be right". Nowhere on earth, continues the myth in which most Australians believe, is there a quality of life to match this one. No other country is so blessed with such a combination of sunshine, natural scenery, superb beaches, fine and uncrowded sporting and other public facilities; no other has this abundant space, this cornucopia of good living, this capacity and talent for relaxation and leisure. The problems of other industrialised countries, especially those of urban deterioration and pollution, of street crime and violence, are often said to have been largely avoided. And Australians in their personal relations do not, it is claimed, have the complexes and inhibitions which mark the behaviour of so many in the older societies; human contact is altogether more relaxed, more genial, more tolerant.

7. The confidence that Australia is best is a constant in the daily scene here. Non-Australian companies who wish to sell successfully

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are well-advised to portray an Australian image, a point not lost on Toyota, Nissan or, I am glad to say BP, and other British firms who perform well in this market. The Australian audience loves to be told that this or that Australian achievement has no equal. When the Australian Prime Minister was preparing to make a statement on the environment earlier this year it was actually trailed by the Government's official information services as "The World's Greatest Environment Statement". It is not so long either since a prominent magazine dubbed his principal lieutenant, Paul Keating, as "The World's Greatest Treasurer". Not all Australians would agree but few see such descriptions as absurd. Much of the impetus which drives Australia to its excellence in sport is fired by a national determination to assert Australianness against the rest of the world.

The Reality

8. How valid are Australian claims of achievement? The natural reaction to much of the hyperbole is to attempt to puncture the claims, an easy temptation for a Briton in Australia since it is with the appropriate British parallel, for historical or psychological reasons, that the comparison is frequently made. But my purpose is the more difficult and more useful one of attempting to see Australian society clearly.

The Political System

9. Australians have no natural respect for authority and are often contemptuous of their governments and politicians. But they are quick to counter any suggestion that their political system is inferior to anyone else's. Yet if there is one major feature of British society which Australians rarely criticise it is our parliamentary democracy. The Australian style of parliamentary procedure and debate has evolved differently from our own and there are aspects of the Westminster style which Australians would not wish to emulate. But the fundamental features of our parliamentary system are freely and uninhibitedly praised by Australians and the debt owed by Australian parliaments to our own is very evident, even if some aspects of Australia's parliamentary practice are more American than British.

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10. Australia's democracy is genuine. The fate of governments is determined in the end by popular opinion. Public debate is probably freer and more open than anywhere in Europe. Australia now has nine governments and nine parliaments (one Federal, six State and two Territory), all subject to regular elections. It is the multiplicity of governments which leads to the frequent charge that Australia is over-governed. The brash, go-getting Aussie entrepreneur has his part in the myth but in reality Australians depend more than most people on government. Despite the much expressed contempt for governments this is in some ways the greatest Nanny-State of all. By any standards nine governments for 16 million people must be too much and most Australians feel it to be so. But most, for reasons of history and geography, would jib at giving up their own state government. When the previous Governor-General suggested in his farewell speech earlier this year that Australia needed to move towards a more centralised system his words fell on stony ground. Many Australians feel loyalty to their state before their country and regard Canberra as an incestuous bureaucratic/political think-tank divorced from the realities of ordinary people.

11. The major charge which can fairly be levelled against public administration in Australia is that of corruption. At the Federal level I know of no evidence of serious corruption and would be surprised to hear of any. But it is the States who control expenditure in the kind of fields where there is scope for corruption and some of the States are notorious. In Queensland earlier this year there was a major enquiry into corruption in the police, government and civil service. Many heads rolled. The distaste of Queenslanders for the type of government to which they have been subjected has just swept the Labor Party into power for the first time in 32 years. The New South Wales Minister for Police told me some time ago that if there was ever an enquiry into corruption in his own police force it would make the Queensland affair look like a children's tea-party - and since he spoke an Independent Commission against Corruption has been established in New South Wales. There was a scandalous case in

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South Australia where a prominent official in charge of the State's anti-drug campaign had to go when he was found to be personally involved in a drug racket. I do not know that a charge of actual corruption can fairly be made against the governments of Victoria and Western Australia but their involvement in unsound and wasteful financial and commercial schemes certainly merits the charge of bad government.

12. Australian democracy is thus full-blooded and in many ways, especially at the Federal level, admirable. Many innovations in democracy such as the ballot-box and women's franchise were introduced in Australia before any other country. But the long-established corruption and maladministration in the States are a bad blemish on the country's political system. The quality of government at State level is generally poor. Yet I do not find that surprising. The population base of 16 million is too small to provide politicians of high quality to man political parties in nine separate political units.

A "Fair Go"?

13. Article One of the Australian Creed is that everyone should have a "Fair Go". It is a principle invoked by politicians of all parties and by public opinion in general. Its historical roots lie deep in the unfairness, class divisions and political oppression of the societies from which many of Australia's migrants have come in the last two hundred years. They did not come to Australia to continue to endure the unfairness which they had left behind them.

14. Yet last April a newspaper opinion poll suggested that 83% of those questioned believed that Australia was becoming a less fair society. A study by a Research School of Social Studies has recently concluded that "Australia is not as just as it was and is certainly not as just as many countries with which it compares itself". If justice means a generally equitable level of income distribution (and that is the yardstick this and similar studies have used) then there is something in the argument. A 1988 World Bank Report showed that in 1975/76 5.4% of total household incomes in Australia went to the

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less well-off 20% of families while 30.5% of the total went to the top 10%. (Figures for the UK were 7% and 23.4% respectively). The 1984 Household Expenditure Survey stated that household income for the rich was in that year 8.2 times that of the poor, and the figure grew in 1985/6 to 9.7. Department of Social Security figures suggest that the proportion of people living in poverty (by the Department's definition) increased from 8.2% to 12.5% in the years 1972-82.

15. The desirable pattern of income distribution is of course a matter for debate. But my point is a different one - that despite the obeisance paid in the Australian myth to the concept of fairness and the associated concept of social equality, most Australians now apparently doubt how fair that society is. The same Australians would probably bridle at any suggestion that the outlines of a class system can be discerned in their country but an examination of the richer suburbs, the clubs and boardrooms of Melbourne, Sydney and other cities, might discomfit them. The lack of class distinction is one of the least convincing elements in the Australian myth; class divisions arose soon after the original settlement. This land of "mateship" and democracy has more private schools than Britain. Even though there are special factors, such as the existence of cheap Catholic schools, the fact is that one in three secondary school pupils are in private schools, one of the highest rates in the world.

16. The concept of the "fair go" was evolved in a male-dominated society. Women have made big strides to equality in recent years but the average hourly pay of a female worker is still only 65% of that of a male (compared to 76% in Britain).

Town and Bush

17. Large parts of the Australian myth were shaped by the experiences of the early settlers, the pioneers whose struggles to tame a hostile environment have inspired a whole corpus of Australian literature. That was the context which gave rise to the concept of mateship and which spawned the distaste for authority, and with it governments and politicians, which is still a marked feature of Australian attitudes. It produced, too, the notion of the "battler", a term

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originally applied to a person who acquired and worked land at the margins of the cultivation, but later applied to anyone who shows unusual courage in adverse circumstances (and now debased to describe anyone for whom life is not plain sailing). The environment which fostered all those ideals was the Bush, that undefined but vast area of Australia which lies outside the areas of urban settlement. Romanticisation of the Bush is still the Australian habit; the frontier image is still much cultivated by many who have never been there; and the two "Crocodile Dundee" films and television series such as the "Flying Doctors" have probably persuaded many foreigners who have never been to this country that the "real Australia" is still Outback Australia.

18. The facts are otherwise. Australia has one of the highest urban populations in the world. Five out of six Australians are town-dwellers. Over 90% of the people of the most populous state, New South Wales, live in towns. Western Australia is two-thirds the size of India but of its 1.5 million inhabitants over 85% live in towns. Some of the most-quoted lines in Australian poetry are: "I love a sunburnt country, a land of rolling plains". But their author, Dorothy McKellar, abandoned the rolling plains for a life in Sydney and the lines are now chiefly heard in a television advertisement for Toyota.

19. And the "battler"? An experienced foreign observer who has visited Australia for over 30 years told me that in his opinion the people of this country have become "soft". There are still people in the Outback for whom life remains hard but they are a small minority. The effects of easy living on the majority of Australians are all too apparent in the relative absence of the work ethic and in denigrating attitudes towards achievement and productivity.

20. Australia's cities are, in my view, one of her best achievements. The area around Sydney harbour is one of the great urban landscapes of the world; Melbourne's charm is less obvious but it is there in the leafy suburbs; Adelaide and Perth and others have strong qualities. But urban development has brought problems here as

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elsewhere. Not many Sydney-siders have homes within sight of the great harbour; it is in the sprawling suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne that today's "typical" Australian lives, probably 5 million people all told. Modern Australia is largely a suburban society; it is to that society that Australian politicians and advertisers must direct their main appeal. The soap-opera "Neighbours" is a more accurate picture of Australia than the "Flying Doctors" - but the erosion of the Australian family (see below) suggests that "Neighbours" is more as Australians like to see themselves than how they are. The spacious suburban life which most of the later migrants sought is becoming less easy to achieve. Earlier this year Australia's Treasurer (Chancellor of the Exchequer) questioned whether the country could any longer accommodate the Australian dream of a young family setting up in a detached house on a quarter-acre block with a backyard swimming pool and a garden for the inescapable barbeque. Much of inhabited Australia is now crowded. Property prices are formidable. Young couples are finding it increasingly difficult to own their own houses; currently the rate for a new mortgage is 17% and there is no tax relief.

21. Australia is developing its own inner-city problems. In 1987 over 90% of those who responded to a Gallop Poll believed violent crime to be on the increase. The Australian Institute of Criminology found that between 1973 and 1987 incidents of rape had increased from 6 to 15 per 100,000, that serious assaults had gone up from 20 to 80 per 100,000 and robbery with violence from 25 to 50. The Chief Constable of Glasgow told me after a visit to Melbourne that the homicide rate in that city was 50% higher than in his own. Organised crime is also a serious problem, with the Mafia and other groups involved. There is, in Australia as elsewhere, considerable concern about drug trafficking. In 1988 Australia was estimated to have 1180 confirmed cases of Aids which at 6.67 cases per 100,000 put it sixth in the world's league table after the United States, Switzerland, France, Canada and Denmark, but before the United Kingdom with 3.27 cases per 100,000. By November this year 1529 cases had been reported, 814 had died and it was estimated that 15,000 were infected by the aids virus.

/The Environment

The Environment

22. Despite its abundant space and low population Australia has not avoided the pollution and environmental degradation of the older industrialised countries. Concern about the environment is growing as quickly here as elsewhere. Mr Hawke's environmental statement earlier this year (see paragraph 7 above) pointed to serious problems of soil degradation in nearly two-thirds of Australia's arable land, 18 species of mammals and 100 species of flowering plants have been wiped out in the last 200 years. Another 40 mammals and 3300 plant species are now rare or endangered. In Queensland rainforest is being destroyed before it has been explored.

23. Probably the most compelling image of Australia outside its borders is that of the perfect sun-soaked, spotlessly-clean beach, populated by surfers and other bronzed, young Australian men and girls. The most famous such beach is Bondi in Sydney, a byword for Australian love of the outdoor life. Swimming at Bondi and many of Sydney's other beaches can now be dangerous because pollution of the sea by the city's sewage has reached the point where health is at risk. Sydney is the worst case but not the only one; there are other examples of serious pollution and the water supplies of some of the principal cities are suspect. Of course, this continent still has thousands of miles of unspoilt beaches but one is forced to the conclusion that that is not due to some special Australian virtue but only to the fact that people do not yet live close enough to them in sufficient numbers to pollute them.

24. The claims made for the merits of the Australian climate are also not self-evidently true. That parts of Australia have some lovely sunny periods is true enough. But the chief quality of its climate seems to me to be its unpredictability. The droughts, bush fires, floods and cyclones which dog the life of the Australian farmer are perhaps well enough known. But it is harder to square the traditional image with the fact that Sydney suffered 75 wet days out of 120 between last January and April, the Australian summer. Exceptional, no doubt - but there are too many exceptions for that picture of sun-soaked Australia to be sustainable.

/The Australia

The Australian Family

25. I have stated above that most Australians now live in suburbs. Recent statistics throw a good deal of light on how they live. The family as an institution would appear to be breaking down. The Australian Bureau of Statistics tells us that about 20% of households are now single people, a rise of 15% in 10 years. This would suggest that about 1 million Australians, out of a population of 16 million or so, now live alone. Only 36% of all families identified in the 1986 Census were the traditional nuclear family, i.e. a couple with dependent children. Among Australian women between the ages of 25 and 29 the de facto relationship is now more common than marriage. 18% of all children are now born out of wedlock (up from 8% 20 years ago) and 8% of all families are single-parent families. The growing problem of the homeless is causing concern. Recent reports have identified between 25,000 and 50,000 children and youths as homeless or at risk of becoming so, a phenomenon described by one leading newspaper as "the heart of the Australian nightmare". A further depressing statistic is that of suicide among the young. 24 in every 100,000 men aged between 15 and 24 committed suicide in 1987, a figure which gave rise to the comment here that Australia was "matching, if not passing, other industrial nations in the number of young people who choose to escape modern problems through suicide".

A Tolerant Society?

26. Australians like to regard themselves as more tolerant and easy going than others. This claim is being tested by the changing racial composition of Australian society. The original Anglo-Saxon character of post-1788 Australia has been steadily modified in the period since the Second World War as large numbers of Southern and Eastern Europeans, Arabs, Asians and others have settled here. The "White Australia" policy of earlier Australian governments is a thing of the past. Australian political parties now adhere to a policy of "multiculturalism". This term has no clear or generally accepted meaning in the Australian context. At a minimum it means accepting the fact that Australia now is and will continue to be a multi-racial /society.

society. For the current Australian Labor government and for many Australians, it means more, a policy of encouraging the ethnic communities to foster their own traditions and aiding that process by special measures of financial and other support for the various communities. A recent study suggests that financial support is distributed to the ethnic communities less according to need than to voting power.

27. Nearly 70% of the Australian population would trace their ultimate origins to the UK and Ireland though for most that would be a less important fact than that they are now Australian. About a fifth of the current population was born overseas and of that three and a half million nearly one and a quarter million were born in the UK or Ireland (the two countries are often coupled together in Australian statistics).

28. While Anglo-Celtic culture is the strongest cultural influence in Australia, and American influence is also powerful, things are changing. In the year ending June, 1989, the 23,900 immigrants who came from the UK represented 16.6% of the total inflow. It is true that the number of New Zealanders who arrived was larger still but the 52,000 Asians who came in that year were 36% of the total. The Department of Immigration predicts that by 2021, on present trends, Asians will constitute the largest overseas-born group in Australia.

29. The pattern of immigration is a sensitive subject here and the public debate is of low quality. When a few years ago one of Australia's finest academics suggested that the rate of Asian immigration was too fast for public opinion to tolerate he was pilloried as "racist" by both the Hawke government and the media. When the former Leader of the Opposition, John Howard, hinted last year that a future Liberal Government might wish to limit the Asian intake, he too was bitterly attacked by the same sources. There is no doubt that many Australians, especially of the older generation, are disturbed by the increasingly complex racial mix of Australian society. The generally tolerant attitudes of most Australians on most questions are often seriously strained by this issue. It goes

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to the heart of the dilemma of a mainly Anglo/Saxon society living in Asia. Australian governments and others put a great deal of energy and resources into trying to solve the problems of the 230,000 Aboriginal inhabitants of Australia; but there are plenty of Australians who believe this effort to be excessive and misdirected, and the situation of most Aborigines remains hapless. There are areas in Sydney and other large cities where racial tension is frequently high, the Vietnamese often being a particular object of antipathy. Immigrants do not always leave behind them the divisions of their homelands. Serbs and Croats continue their vendettas here, as do North and South Vietnamese and others.

30. Yet on balance the Australian record of absorbing immigrants, some 4.6 million since the Second World War, is impressive. The comparative lack of serious friction between the various ethnic communities is a tribute to the generally enlightened attitudes of Australian governments and the population at large. The ordinary Australian is a tolerant person. There is an easiness and openness in personal relationships which distinguishes this country and which, I believe, most visitors find attractive. Whatever the divisions of wealth and class, there is a basic egalitarianism in attitudes. Christian names are used at once, on first encounter, and it does not matter who the owner is. This is still a country of opportunity. There are countless examples of individuals who have risen from nothing to positions of great wealth and influence. But it is a pity that the fact of achievement is not more readily praised by ordinary Australians. There is a curious contrast between their readiness to acknowledge achievement in the sporting arena but to express cynicism about it elsewhere. The desire to cut down tall poppies is a weakness in the Australian make-up.

31. If the Australian myth has its inaccuracies, the image of Australia fostered by the foreign media, insofar as the two things are different, is often defective too. The philistine, iconoclastic, beer-swilling Aussie exists but the Australian does not have a monopoly of these qualities. Far too little recognition is accorded abroad to Australian cultural achievement, to their world-class opera singers

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and ballet, to their novelists whose success in capturing international literary prizes is so impressive, to their film producers or to the massive investment in high-quality cultural facilities and festivals in pretty well all the state capitals. And in assessing the Australian achievement, whether cultural or other, it is always as well to remember that, vast as this country is, its population is a mere 16 million.

CONCLUSION

32. In this attempt to compare the reality of Australian society with the Australian myth I have not consciously sought to seek out the bad or the good but simply to let the facts speak for themselves. Some features of Australian society seem to me admirable. Some of its problems are peculiarly Australian but most are common to all the industrialised countries of the West. And just as the rate of social change tends to increase in Europe, so it does here. The rapid transformation of Australia has implications for British policy and British interests. As Australia has developed its sense of nationhood, as it has more actively cultivated its Asian neighbours, as immigration has changed the composition of Australian society, so Australian attitudes to Britain have changed. For many recent migrants the Australian connexion with Britain has no special meaning. Many young Australians, unlike their parents, have no knowledge of, and no natural predilection for, Britain. The web of family ties which links the two countries is bound to diminish over time. Less and less shall we be able to depend on ties of sentiment. More and more we shall have to recognise Australia for what it really is: an independent state with a powerful sense of nationhood, an urbanised society with most of the problems of similar societies elsewhere, a country hesitantly adapting to its Asian environment, not wanting to weaken its traditional links with Britain, Europe and America but keen to establish with those traditional partners a modern political and commercial relationship which fits the aspirations and sentiments of the Australia of today. The emphasis which Her Majesty's Government have placed in the last eighteen months or so on its wish to create a mature and modern relationship with Australia is, I am sure, the

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right approach and has been warmly received. The maintenance of that relationship will require the same techniques of analysis, policy adjustment, trade promotion and diplomatic cultivation which we customarily apply to other similar foreign countries but which we have, perhaps, not consistently applied to Australia.

33. I am copying this despatch to the High Commissioner in Wellington.

I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully

John Cole.