

**PRIME MINISTER KEVIN RUDD'S
ADDRESS TO THE WORLD YOUTH DAY
PRE-MASS GATHERING,
BARANGAROO, SYDNEY**

Tuesday, 15 July 2008

E & O E

PM: I begin by honouring the first Australians on whose land we meet and whose great cultures we celebrate as among the oldest in human history.

Australia welcomes the youth of the world to Sydney. Australia welcomes the youth of the world to this celebration of faith and this celebration of life.

And as Prime Minister of Australia I welcome you from every land, every path, every continent on this, our planet.

Prime Minister welcomes pilgrims to Australia in various languages.

And Australians. And Australians, g'day and have a great time down under.

You are here for this great celebration of life, this great celebration of faith and this great celebration of hope. And for this you are so much the light of the world at a time when the world has so much darkness.

Too often in the history of the world when young people travelled in great numbers to other parts of the world, they do so in the cause of war. But you here today are here as pilgrims of peace.

Some say there is no place for faith in the 21st Century. I say they are wrong. Some say that faith is the enemy of reason, I say, also they are wrong.

Because faith and reason are great partners in our human history and in our human future. Rich in humanity, rich in scientific progress.

Some say only that which they see wrong in Christianity and in the church, I say let us speak also about what is right in Christianity and the church.

It was the church that began first schools for the poor. It was the church that began first hospitals for the poor. It was the church that began first refuges for the poor and these great traditions continue for the future. And I say this, that Christianity has been an overwhelming force for good in the world.

Australia is a land of great freedom, a land of many cultures, a land of many faiths. But also a land deeply shaped by and proud of this nation's Christian heritage and future. And within that great Christian heritage, we honour deeply the great catholic heritage of Australia as well.

Deep in its tradition, rich in its history, vital in its future. You come here as young pilgrims of the world. I say to you as I conclude, as Prime Minister of Australia, you are welcome guests in our land. May each of you be enriched by your time here among us in Australia just as you enrich Australia by your time here with us. Welcome to Australia.