

THE SPIRIT OF CER

A CELEBRATION OF TRANS-TASMAN RELATIONS



Relations between Australia and New Zealand have developed to a degree as close as any two nations could enjoy.

This exhibition, The Spirit of CER, consists of two parts. The first is a display on the history of the development of Australian - New Zealand relations with a particular focus on the negotiation of the Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement 1983. The second is a display on the further development of relations between the two countries in many areas of Closer Economic Relations since 1983.

At the National Australasian Convention that met in Sydney in 1891 to discuss the federation of the British colonies in the South-west Pacific, New Zealand was represented along with the six Australian colonies.

Although New Zealand decided not to join the Australian federation, relations between the two Pacific Dominions were strengthened by the common experiences of Australian and New Zealand soldiers in the First World War, where they joined together to operate as an Australia New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC).

In 1944, the two countries signed their first international agreement independently from Great Britain. In this Australian - New Zealand Agreement, or 'ANZAC' agreement, the two countries asserted their rights as principals in the negotiations over Pacific territories after World War II. Subsequently, in 1951, both countries signed with the United States a security arrangement known as the ANZUS Treaty.

In 1965, Australia and New Zealand signed a Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) but by far the most important agreement negotiated between the two countries was the Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement of 1983 (CER). Through this agreement the two countries have removed all barriers to trans-Tasman trade in goods.

The World Trade Organisation has described the CER as 'the world's most comprehensive, effective and multilaterally compatible free trade agreement'.

In the whole of the period since the signing of the CER, two-way trade between Australia and New Zealand has

increased five-fold to \$16.2 billion in 2001-02. New Zealand is now Australia's fifth-largest market, taking 5.9 per cent of our exports. Australia is currently New Zealand's most important market, taking nearly 20 per cent of New Zealand's exports.

CER has brought substantial wealth and employment to both countries by helping to generate business activity.

The Open Skies Agreement which took effect in November 2000 allows Australian and New Zealand international airlines to operate across the Tasman, and then beyond to third countries without restriction.

Free movement of peoples across the Tasman was formalised by the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement of 1973.

In the spirit of the CER, systematic attention has also been paid to the harmonisation of business law, customs and quarantine procedures, to the removal of impediments to mutual investment and to the freeing of trade in services.

Trans-Tasman trade has been further integrated with the entry into force of the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement (TTRMA) on 1 May 1998. Under this arrangement, goods that are legally able to be sold in one country are, in principle, able to be sold in the other. Likewise, people registered to practise an occupation in one country are able to practise the same occupation in the other.

The close relationship between Australia and New Zealand enjoyed today will be further strengthened in the future because of the solid foundations through which the relationship is operating.