



**Mr Peter Joseph, OAM. B Com, MBA
Chairman, Black Dog Institute
Launch of the Black Dog Institute
Sydney, Tuesday 12 February 2002**

**MY DEAR PREMIER,
MINISTER FOR HEALTH,
MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF BLACK DOG
PROFESSOR GORDON PARKER
FRIENDS FROM THE MEDIA,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS**

NOT SURPRISINGLY, WINSTON CHURCHILL HAS BEEN WELL QUOTED THIS AFTERNOON. FOLLOWING TWO SUCH DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS, IN THE PREMIER AND PROFESSOR GORDON PARKER, I FEEL A BIT LIKE CLEMENT ATLEE WHO CHURCHILL DESCRIBED AS A MODEST MAN WHO HAD A GOOD DEAL TO BE MODEST ABOUT.

IT IS MY HAPPY TASK THIS AFTERNOON TO THANK, AND INDEED, CONGRATULATE THE PREMIER AND THE NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT ON THEIR VISION IN COMMITTING SO GENEROUSLY TO THE VITAL WORK OF THE BLACK DOG INSTITUTE. UNLIKE THE PILLORIED CLEMENT ATLEE, MR CARR, HIS OUTSTANDING HEALTH MINISTER, CRAIG KNOWLES, AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAVE A GREAT DEAL TO BE PROUD ABOUT ADVANCING SOCIAL POLICY.

IT IS HEARTENING TO FIND AN AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL LEADER WITH THE INTELLECT, THE INTEGRITY AND THE COURAGE TO ACTUALLY LEAD – TO STAND UP FOR WHAT IS ETHICAL, TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF

FEAR THROUGH EDUCATION AND OUTREACH, TO TAKE PEOPLE WHERE THE LESS INFORMED AMONG THEM MAY FEEL TIMID ABOUT VENTURING, TO COMBINE BOLD ACTION FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD WITH ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST FOR OUR WHOLE SOCIETY.

IT IS EQUALLY HEARTENING TO FIND A MEDICAL LEADER WITH THE VISION, THE SKILL AND THE PASSION, THE ENERGY AND THE LOVE OF WHAT HE DOES TO CHANGE IT FOR THE BETTER AND TO ENTHUSE AND ENCOURAGE PEOPLE OF LIKE MIND. WE HAVE FOUND SUCH A LEADER IN PROFESSOR GORDON PARKER.

I AM SURE BOTH OUR SPEAKERS WOULD BE THE FIRST TO AGREE THAT AS IMPORTANT AS TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT MAY BE, IT IS BUT ONE MORE PIECE IN THE COMPLEX PUZZLE THAT IS MENTAL HEALTH. THERE REMAINS BIG CHALLENGES IN THE YEARS AHEAD AS MENTAL HEALTH SEEMS DESTINED TO BECOME AN EVEN GREATER ISSUE FOR THE COMMUNITY.

IF I MAY QUOTE CHURCHILL YET AGAIN, WHEN THE SECOND WORLD WAR WAS AT ITS HEIGHT, THIS TITAN OF A STATESMAN WHO WAS BRAVE ENOUGH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE SHADOW THAT OFTEN CAME OVER HIM, THIS FAR-SEEING THINKER OBSERVED THAT 'THE EMPIRES OF THE FUTURE ARE THE EMPIRES OF THE MIND'.

HE WAS, OF COURSE, SPEAKING POLITICALLY, BUT WHETHER BY INTENT OR ACCIDENT, HE ENUNCIATED A TRUTH OUR AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY NOW CANNOT AVOID FACING.

IT IS A STATISTICAL SHADOW THAT'S DARK AND STARK; IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS OR SO THE TWO BIGGEST HEALTH ISSUES WE WILL BE FACING AS A NATION WILL BE INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND MENTAL ILLNESS.

NOT HEART DISEASE OR DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE OR ROAD ACCIDENTS OR VIOLENCE ... ALL TERRIBLE SOCIAL SCOURGES ... BUT SECOND ONLY TO THE PLAGUE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE IS MENTAL ILLNESS.

THAT'S HOW SERIOUS THE PROBLEM IS.

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT 20% OF THE POPULATION BEING AFFECTED AT SOME POINT IN THEIR LIVES.

20% OF THE POPULATION WITH A DISEASE THAT IS AS DEBILITATING AS IT IS COMPLEX AND MYSTERIOUS.

20% OF SUFFERERS IN OUR MAJOR CITIES.

20% OF SUFFERERS IN RURAL AND REGIONAL AUSTRALIA.

AND AS MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE COMING TO REALISE, 'DEPRESSION' IS, AS SOMEONE ONCE SAID, IN MANY WAYS A WIMP WORD FOR WHAT CAN BE THE TOUGHEST ILLNESS IN THE BOOK, AND IN MANY CASES THE LEAST UNDERSTOOD. ANYONE WHO HAS READ WILLIAM STYRON'S BOOK, 'DARKNESS VISIBLE', WOULD UNDERSTAND.

WHO NOW DOESN'T KNOW THAT AUSTRALIA STILL HAS ONE OF THE WORLD'S HIGHEST RATES OF SUICIDES, ESPECIALLY AMONG YOUNG MALES? WE SPEND UNTOLD AMOUNTS OF MONEY EVERY YEAR TO REDUCE THE ROAD TOLL BUT AS A SOCIETY WE PERMIT MORE YOUNG MEN TO KILL THEMSELVES THAN DIE ON OUR ROADS.

IN PLAYING OUR PART WITH THE BLACK DOG INSTITUTE TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE AND TO HELP DESTYGMATISE DEPRESSION, WE'VE COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE DISEASE STRIKES RANDOMLY ACROSS SOCIETY.

ITS MANY VICTIMS HAVE INCLUDED MICHELANGELO, MONET AND VAN GOGH; CHARLES DICKENS, ERNEST HEMINGWAY AND GRAHAM GREENE; VIVIEN LEIGH, MARILYN MONROE AND AUDREY HEPBURN; AND, OF COURSE, CLOSER TO HOME, ANY NUMBER OF OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY. I DARE SAY THAT THERE WOULD BE FEW FAMILIES THAT HAVEN'T BEEN TOUCHED IN SOME WAY.

THERE ARE THOSE AMONG US HERE TODAY WHO CAN SPEAK OF THIS DREADFUL AFFLICTION FROM PAINFUL PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. IN PARTICULAR I ECHO THE PREMIER'S COMMENTS AND THANK AND ACKNOWLEDGE EVE AND GUY SHEPPARD FOR THEIR CHARACTER, COURAGE AND GENEROSITY IN TELLING THEIR STORY IN A DESIRE TO HELP OTHERS. I KNOW THERE ARE OTHERS HERE WHO HAVE BEEN SIMILARLY TOUCHED AND OUR HEARTS GO OUT TO THEM.

INDEED, THAT'S PRECISELY WHY WE ARE HERE: TO TESTIFY TO ITS POWER AND TO JOIN IN THE FIGHT AGAINST IT.

AND AS THEY SAY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A BRAIN SURGEON TO KNOW THAT THE PROBLEM DEMANDS EXPERT ATTENTION. ALREADY A NATIONAL INITIATIVE 'BEYONDBLUE' IS UNDERWAY AND THE BLACK DOG INSTITUTE WITH ITS CLINICAL AND RESEARCH FOCUS GOING BACK 15 YEARS IS COMPLEMENTING THAT INITIATIVE. IT IS NOT A 'START UP' WITH SOME GOOD IDEAS, IT IS THE PRE-EMINENT BODY IN THIS COUNTRY FOR RESEARCH INTO AND CLINICAL TREATMENT OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY DISORDERS. IT OPERATES AT BOTH A PRIMARY AND TERTIARY LEVEL. IT HAS A HARD WON REPUTATION FOR TACKLING THE TOUGHEST OF CASES. IT IS DETERMINED TO CHANGE THE PARADIGM AS TO HOW DEPRESSION IS THOUGHT ABOUT, DIAGNOSED AND TREATED.

IT IS A HUGE MEDICAL AND SOCIAL JOB TO TACKLE, AND THE TOOLS REQUIRED MUST BE PRECISION ONES AVAILABLE ACROSS THE COMMUNITY.

OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS, THE MAGNIFICENT WORK OF THE RESEARCHERS AND CLINICIANS IN THE MOOD DISORDERS UNIT HAS BEEN APPRECIATED BY EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THIS CRITICAL CAMPAIGN. GORDON PARKER'S TEAM HAVE AN ENVIABLE REPUTATION BOTH NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY WHERE THEY ARE NOT AFRAID TO CHALLENGE EXISTING MYTHOLOGIES. EXCELLENCE AND COMPASSION HAVE BEEN THEIR WATCHWORDS. AFFIRMING AND MAINTAINING HUMAN DIGNITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN AT THE CENTRE OF THEIR LABOURS.

NOW THE TOOL MUST BE TRANSFORMED INTO SOMETHING WITH EVEN MORE PRECISION. THAT IS WHY THE CLINICAL REFERRAL UNIT (THE MDU) HAS FORMALLY BECOME A UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES - BASED CENTRE AND RESEARCH FOUNDATION TO EXPLORE, EDUCATE AND ELEVATE THIS MOST PRESSING OF HEALTH ISSUES. IT HAS AN INDEPENDENT BOARD WHOSE DIVERSE SKILLS EXPERIENCE AND WISDOM IS A GREAT RESOURCE FOR THE ORGANISATION. IT'S JOB IS TO FRIEND RAISE, FUND RAISE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

THE EMPIRE OF THE MIND IS NOT A CHEAP ONE TO EXPLORE BUT EXPLORE WE MUST.

AS YOU WILL APPRECIATE, TO SET UP THIS HUGE EXPEDITION REQUIRED THE LONG AND HEROIC WORK OF MANY PEOPLE, AND IT IS WITH PRIDE AND ADMIRATION THAT I WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR DEDICATED LABOURS.

LIST.....

- CRAIG KNOWLES AND HIS STAFF (EMILIO FERRER IN PARTICULAR) FOR THEIR AVAILABILITY FOR WISE COUNSEL AND SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSAL FROM BLACK DOG;

- PROFESSOR BEVERLEY RAPHAEL, THE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR MENTAL HEALTH IN THE NSW HEALTH DEPARTMENT FOR HER ENCOURAGEMENT AND BELIEF;
- MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF BLACK DOG WHOSE NAMES AND BACKGROUNDS ARE SET OUT IN THE HISTORY OF THE MDU IN THE MEDIA KIT – I ACKNOWLEDGE THOSE HERE TODAY - PROFESSOR BRUCE DOWTON, DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES, NICK COWDERY, IAN FOULSHAM, JOHN KONRADS, BILL LOEWENTHAL DR MEG SMITH AND DOUG SNEDDEN WE HAVE APOLOGIES FROM CARMEL NILAND WHO IS CURRENTLY NEGOTIATING THE FUNDING FOR HER OWN DEPARTMENT WITH TREASURY AND MARY VALLENTINE WHO IS BEING CREATIVE WITH THE SSO AS I SPEAK,
- JOHN BEVINS AND HIS CREATIVE TEAM FROM JOHN BEVINS ADVERTISING FOR THE INSPIRING CONCEPT OF THE LOGO AND THEIR AMAZINGLY CREATIVE CONTRIBUTION TO TODAY;
- GREG DANIELS OF ISSUES & IMAGES FOR THE EXPERTISE OF IAN DOSE – A DEDICATED PROFESSIONAL WITHOUT PEER;
- GLENNIS KENNEDY THE CEO OF CATO DESIGN FOR THE ILLUSTRATION OF OUR DYNAMIC LOGO;
- DANNY GILBERT AND HIS LEGAL TEAM AT GILBERT + TOBIN FOR KEEPING US COMPLIANT IN OUR SET UP PHASE;
- PREMIER’S PROTOCOL SECTION FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE WITH TODAY’S EVENT.

PROFESSOR PARKER HAS GIVEN US DETAILS OF THE CLINICS, RESOURCE AND TRAINING CENTRES, EVALUATION UNIT AND RESEARCH FACILITIES OF THE INSTITUTE. THE PREMIER HAS INSPIRED US WITH THE FRANK ACCOUNT OF HIS JOURNEY TOWARDS APPRECIATING THE IMPORTANCE OF DEALING WITH ANXIETY DISORDERS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

I SUSPECT THAT HIS PATH FROM SCEPTICISM TO COMMITMENT TO ACTION IS THE STORY OF MANY PEOPLE'S ADVANCE IN THIS AREA.

WE NOW HAVE TO WORK TO CONVERT THAT ROAD INTO A FREEWAY.

PLEASE JOIN ME IN THANKING BOTH OUR SPEAKERS.

MAY I CONCLUDE BY ADOPTING ANOTHER OF CHURCHILL'S RALLYING CRIES. IN 1943, HIS WAR WAS AGAINST AN EVIL FOE, AND HIS AIM WAS TO LIBERATE A CONTINENT. OUR CAMPAIGN IS AGAINST A LIFE-THREATENING DISEASE THAT CAN TAKE MANY FORMS AND OUR AIM IS TO GALVANISE THE COMMUNITY INTO DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM BEFORE IT BECOMES AN EPIDEMIC. IT IS A NOBLE GOAL – TO LIBERATE SO MANY OF OUR FELLOW CITIZENS.

SO WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THESE DISTINGUISHED AUSTRALIANS, I CONFIDENTLY BELIEVE WE CAN SAY WITH CHURCHILL, 'WE SHALL NOT FAIL OR FALTER; WE SHALL NOT WEAKEN OR TIRE. NEITHER WILL THE LONG-DRAWN TRIALS OF VIGILANCE AND EXERTION WEAR US DOWN. GIVE US THE TOOLS AND WE WILL FINISH THE JOB'.