



PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER JULIA GILLARD

THE AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPING DINNER - 24TH AUGUST 2012

It gives me great pleasure to provide this message on the occasion of the Australian Peacekeeping Dinner.

General Peter Cosgrove, while serving as commander of the international peacekeeping forces in East Timor, said "One of the great aptitudes that Aussies have...[is that] it is really easy to tap this great vein of compassion and empathy." Around the world, Australian peacekeepers are set apart by their kindness and dedication; offering hope to those who need it most.

Restoring hope to societies ravaged by conflict and violence has been an enduring motivation for our nation's contributions to over 60 peacekeeping missions in more than 30 countries since 1947.

Today's peacekeepers carry on our proud 65 year history in peacekeeping. In East Timor, the Solomon Islands, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Israel, Lebanon, Palestinian territories, Egypt and South Sudan our men and women continue to serve with the courage, professionalism and dedication that has become the trademark of Australian peacekeepers.

I have had the privilege of meeting some of our remarkable peacekeepers and I know their work is not without risks, as evidenced by the ultimate sacrifice that fourteen of them have made. As such, I've always given their missions my unwavering support, to ensure their efforts will never be in vain.

So as you gather tonight, my thoughts are very much with you - thankful that our nation is served by men and women of such courage and compassion, who continue to make the world a better place.

The Honourable Julia Gillard
Prime Minister of Australia