

Message of Greeting by the Prime Minister of Australia, John Howard, for the opening of the United Buddy Bears in Sydney



I am delighted to welcome UNICEF's Buddy bears to Sydney and to support this creative initiative.

The Buddy Bears' presence over the next weeks will add a colourful dimension to Circular Quay and highlight the crucial work UNICEF performs in helping the world's children. The central message of the Buddy Bears exhibition – of tolerance, peaceful coexistence and support for children in need – is one the Australian Government is proud to support.

Australia is proud also to continue to support the work of UNICEF in saving and improving children's lives through assistance from our overseas aid programme. In our own Asia Pacific region, UNICEF provides help to enable children to attend school, deliver immunisation programmes, combat HIV/AIDS and recover from humanitarian crises. The Australian Government supports particularly UNICEF's work on tackling HIV/AIDS: we need to continue to work to bring the impact of HIV/AIDS on children to the attention of world leaders.

I am sure the many and varied Buddy Bears brought together from around the globe will play a great part in delivering UNICEF's message. And I am delighted to hear that a new Buddy Bear carrying the distinctively colourful art of Goodwill Ambassador Ken Done is to be unveiled today.

I hope many people visit the Buddy Bears on Circular Quay and that their presence reminds us of the importance of reaching out to children that need us and assists in the vital task of fundraising for UNICEF's work.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Howard".

John Howard