

## REMARKS

At the dinner celebrating the 50th Anniversary of New Zealand's connections with  
Antarctica

Royal New Zealand Air Force Museum  
Wigram, Christchurch

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*As prepared*

I am delighted to be here this evening at this magnificent Air Force Museum to help celebrate a half-century of New Zealand's association with Antarctica.

It is always a pleasure to come to the Mainland, more so for a wonderful occasion such as this.

It is apt that we dine tonight in the presence of the Auster 7c, the very aircraft that played an important role in famous Sir Ed Hillary – Sir Vivian Fuchs Antarctic Expedition from 1955 -58.

I am also thrilled to see that there is a P-51D Mustang here at the museum. This plane is one of my country's finest examples of aeronautical engineering. Call me biased but I think that it was the best aircraft in World War Two.

Let me begin my congratulating Antarctic New Zealand and the Christchurch City Council for their wonderful hospitality and tremendous work in organizing this weekend gala of events.

Asides from marking a half-century of New Zealand involvement in the Antarctic, this year also marks the 50th anniversary of United States – New Zealand cooperation on that same frozen continent.

Since 1957, Kiwis and Americans have worked together on the ice to advance science and exploration.

I was lucky enough to see first-hand the great work conducted by both Kiwis and Americans on the ice earlier this year when I traveled south to Antarctica to commemorate 50 years of US – New Zealand cooperation there.

Joining me on this expedition were Prime Minister Clark, Sir Ed Hillary, Antarctica New Zealand's CEO Lou Sanson, Dr. Arden Bement of the U.S. National Science Foundation, Mayor Garry Moore and other dignitaries

US – New Zealand collaboration in Antarctica covers the full range of activities on the ice - the operational, the logistical, the diplomatic and, most definitely, the social.

I left Antarctica extremely optimistic that the Kiwi – American relationship will continue in the same great health it has enjoyed for the last 50 years. After all, Antarctica is the one place on earth where we are not just good friends, but also good neighbors.

Reaching the 50 year mark is quite an achievement. My son reminds me that 50 years is old. I say it is just the beginning.

Once again, I salute 50 years of both New Zealand's own achievement and of our joint achievements in Antarctica.

I wish everyone well for a successful weekend of commemoration and celebration.

Thank you and enjoyed the evening.