

9th June '91

Dear Lois & Peter,

We are in the middle of a long-week-end for the Queen's birthday. Her actual birthday was last-month, but, being Australians, we change dates to suit ourselves (even Australia Day always falls on a Monday). Queen's birthday long-week-end now co-incides with the opening of the snow season in the alps. It opened this year without any snow. In earlier years we used to spend this week-end at Sassapas helping "uncle" Jack to re-arrange his garden.

When we arrived at Louie's last Sunday we were greeted by the whole family, (with two exceptions) Jennie, Bill's family had re-arranged their program to be there. It was a very happy afternoon enjoyed by the two birthday girls in particular. D.K. provided a joint birthday cake, cooked by one of the Vietnamese cake shops in Springvale.

(The Vietnamese did obtain some benefit from their years of French rule.) As you can imagine, Claire was in fine form.

Mum was very pleased to hear from you both on the actual day. I had a bit of a cold on Monday and took Tuesday off (something I would not have done in any more conscientious days). Winter set in on Thursday with rain, which continued through Friday and Saturday. Fortunately, the drought-stricken areas of the State also got the rain. Yesterday's football games were played in such unceddy conditions that it was hard to tell the teams apart. The weather has picked up today - dry and 16°, with 18° forecast for tomorrow.

Jenny, Bill & family are at San Remo for the long week-end. Louie's are also making the most of the day elsewhere, but Graeme, Bronnie & family will be here for afternoon tea. Graeme rang during the week to say that there was still some possibility of getting a 'check' over.



but nothing definite as yet.

I do not know what, if anything, is reported in Chicago regarding happenings in Australia. The shoot-out between Bob Hawke and Paul Keating occurred last Monday. Hawke won 66 to 44, so he continues as our P.M. whilst Keating retired to the back benches of Parliament. Our new Treasurer - Kerin - was agriculture minister. As a former shock-farmer, he did quite a good job there. He does have an economics degree, but is an unknown quantity as far as his new job is concerned. There is a bit of a worry that both Kerin and the new deputy leader of the labour party - Howe - are both from the left wing of the party and may not be tough enough in cutting back government spending. The farmers are not too happy that Bill Keltie (former head of the ACTU) has been made agriculture minister. The farmers and the unions don't seem to have much in common. Hawke himself has been under pressure from the centre left of his own party which accuses him of handling the truth very carelessly on a couple of occasions. Without Keating as his minder, Hawke has been far less than impressive. All very destabilizing. Our <sup>FT</sup> weathered to around 75c U.S. The share market also re-acted unfavourably to the leadership uncertainties.

Dot behaved herself a little better this week and decided to acknowledge my presence on a couple of occasions. I am still a long way from getting her properly trained. Our relationship is still quite strained.

This week (weather permitting) we are to go on a Robus walk along the Yarra (actually a path beside the Yarra River) from the Burke Road Bridge to Barkna Park. I'll have to buy and book in both cars for service. The Citroen is overdue. The Bug is under in Kgs. but over in time. It has been a little temperamental in starting. An electrical fault, which, according to the RACV whom I called, may be the spark plug leads.

Love,  
Gene and Glen xx