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ROY HILL CHAIRMAN, MRS RINEHART'S SPEECH TO THE CONSULAR CORP OF QUEENSLAND

Last night at a gala event in Sydney to celebrate the 2014 CEO Magazine Awards, Roy Hill Chairman, Mrs Gina Rinehart was honoured as Chairman of the Year for her tireless work in pursuit of her goals, powered by her unyielding belief in a better future for her company and for Australia as a whole.

His Excellency, The Governor, The Honourable Paul de Jersey & Mrs de Jersey, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Consular Corp of Queensland..

Almost Two weeks ago Brisbane hosted an historic event for Australia: The coming together of the major economies of the world at the G20.

It was an opportunity to show that Australia is open for investment and business and, a great chance for our nation to learn. As much as this was Australia on show, it really was an opportunity for an awakening to show how much the region around us is racing ahead.

Australia has been carried on the sheep's back, then the mining industry for generations. As a result we have some of the best living standards in the world, as well as enterprising people in the outback, and companies who earn major wealth from the outback. But work ethic, common sense, dedication, cost competitiveness, and perspective are things much of Australia needs to re-learn from Asia and other nations.

I say "re-learn" because Australia has always known how to develop and progress despite harsh outback conditions but, somehow, we've figured out ways to make it tougher for ourselves to compete.

Regulation, approvals, licences and compliance are taking the momentum out of our advantage even though our nation, blessed with natural resources, is the envy of many countries.

This big government mindset is costing Australia deeply and pushing the country into more and more debt. It was an honour at the G20 and later in Melbourne to meet the amazing new Prime Minister of India, Mr Modi, who left a deep impression with so many thinking people.

He has only been in office for such a short time but has already started to change his country and turn the focus of the public service back on being a service for the public, improving the lives of his people.

Since taking office in May and in his first 100 days, he's targeted the lack of work ethic and accountability of the public service. For example, he's ordered daily early morning meetings to make sure they showed up at work – and then again at the end of each day. So, the first meeting of the day started at 7am and his end of day meetings started at 7pm. This has effectively doubled the work hours of public servants. The culture of long- lunches also came to an end.

Prime Minister Modi believed that the public service was failing the people and holding the country back. He wanted change.

Suddenly, they became accountable. Start and finish times for each public servant were recorded online so that every member of the Indian public would be able to see if a bureaucrat they had dealings with was at work or not. Now, it's become easier to obtain government approvals and licences that had previously taken forever.

Prime Minister Modi wanted to provide the opportunity of bank accounts to the poor, who had until then, been denied such access. There was resistance from officials who said it would be impossible to do in a few years. But he pushed on with the plan, announced it publicly, and within months, 74-million people who'd never had an account in their life, had money in the bank.

This boosted money available for investment and created opportunities for the poor to save, establish credit and then start their own little businesses.

He helped small enterprise by cutting regulation. Any company that employed fewer than 100 staff were freed of government oversight and allowed to self-regulate. People started employing.

Prime Minister Modi wanted the world to see India differently. He has travelled to every major country to attract investment, making known he is taking his country from "Red Tape to Red Carpet".

He recognised this is the way to improve the living standards of his people.

Prime Minister Modi changed the attitude of his Government and he's starting to change the country and this has happened in just a handful of months.

It's a powerful statement - Red Tape to Red Carpet, and it's something we in Australia could learn from. Regulation, approvals, licences, and over-governance in Australia has become a \$250-Billion dollar burden. That's the estimate from global accounting company Deloitte who recently reported the red tape industry in this country now employs more than 1 million people and has become our fastest growing sector.

It's an unimaginable amount of money and waste. To put this into perspective, consider this; the Australian mining industry, the country's largest, contributes \$200 Billion to the economy. Regulation is estimated to be costing us more than the mining industry provides. Incredible.

Mining is still the most regulated of all industries and the most vital for export revenue.

Last weekend, I also spoke at the Small Business Association of Australia annual gala dinner in Darwin and heard many stories of how this is directly hurting our biggest employer group and this important core of the economy, small business.

Research just released by the Institute of Public Affairs clearly shows fewer people than at any time in the last decade are starting new businesses – and over-regulation is the top-of-the- list reason.

People are overwhelmed with compliance and rules everywhere. The great spirit of entrepreneurs, who've built the country, faces being crushed with paperwork. Multi-floors are taken up in businesses to get through regulations, approvals, licences and compliance. You do wonder, how small business, the backbone of our country, can cope?

A generation ago, being your own boss was part of the great Australian dream. Now, younger people would rather not put the effort in to build their own business.

I've spent the last few months working in various parts of Asia and the difference in attitudes to business and promoting growth is profound.

Many Asian countries, and Prime Minister Modi, have the red-carpet out for investment. A strong work ethic is widespread and impressive. Australia should be doing the same.

In Asia, there is a greater awareness of economics and simple, blindingly obvious common sense, that we seem to struggle with - such as creating wealth before you spend it!

Most people outside of Australia can't understand how we have been through a mining boom but still ended up with record national debt that continues to grow at a billion a month.

Australia can learn so much from our Asian neighbours and their dedication to work and efficiency, productivity, cost competitiveness, and common sense.

These last few months, we have travelled around Asia with the great news our mega project, Roy Hill, is ahead of schedule, unfortunately this is too rare in Australia. Roy Hill is a project of national significance and international importance. I prefer to say it's an Australasian effort because of the strong support of our partners, financiers and contractors and equipment suppliers in the region, and stretching to the United States for both some financing and, for transport equipment.

It is one of the nation's largest mainland construction projects and last week we marked the milestone of just over two-thirds completion - ahead of our already accelerated schedule. For an Australian project of this magnitude, this is an incredible achievement. These days, Australians are not renowned for 'on-time and on-schedule'— let alone being ahead – so we are impressing our partners.

We have employed directly 25,000 men and women since starting and many tens of thousands more in related industries whose employment and small businesses depend on our work. Today, more than 7,200 people work across the project and we've engaged 200 companies who contribute as contractors – from different parts of Australia.

We've achieved many firsts for Australia: The largest ever financing for an on-land mining project anywhere in the world, the biggest commercial deal between Australia and South Korea, the fastest conveyor system for an iron-ore mine, the largest processing plant, with 55 million tonnes per annum of product, the largest bucket wheel reclaimers, both at mine and port.

It is the kind of investment Australia needs – but I have to tell you the path has been lined with regulations and approvals – even ridicule.

We are up to 3000 separate approvals and licenses – some of them are many thousands of pages in paperwork. If that shocks you, at another coal project in Queensland we used to own, we tallied over 5000 licences and approvals. Some of those approvals required thousands of pages of paperwork. These additional government imposed costs are just too great.

We need take some of Prime Minister Modi's wisdom, Red Tape to Red Carpet, and to act!

We should also listen to the recommendations of the B20 who were tasked to recommend ways to stimulate economies, increase growth, and raise living standards. They similarly recommended lessening government red tape, and compliance, but sadly for our country at least, there seems reluctance in Canberra to listen.

Our federal Government says they have made cuts, but there's no point claiming credit for cutting things that haven't even been enacted. Australia needs to show we are serious about cutting government burdens and compete internationally – after all, as I often say, people won't buy our exports if they are more expensive just because they like Aussies!

May I leave for your consideration another idea I borrowed and amended a bit from my father? He was a great proponent of sunset legislation for each regulation. So, after 3 years, each regulation would expire, and be considered on its merits. If it had not hurt our country, it could be re-introduced – otherwise it would be subject to sunset.

Thank you for the invitation to address you tonight. May I wish all of you a blessed and happy Christmas.

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