



The old and the new get together in Spencer Street in a mixture of public transport spanning almost 70 years.

Picture: TONY FEDER

As patriots we're the laziest: Hamer

Australia was the laziest and most apathetic nation in the world when it came to celebrating its national day, the Premier, Mr. Hamer, said yesterday.

Mr. Hamer was opening the History of Transportation mural at Spencer Street Station.

He said he would raise the issue at the next Premiers' Conference in the hope of rectifying the situation.

"Imagine the Americans changing Independence Day, or the French Bastille Day, just so they could have a long weekend," Mr. Hamer said.

Referring to the mural he said it was significant that transport should be the theme of Australia Day celebrations this year.

"It brought this nation together and saw it settled and developed."

The mural took Melbourne artist Harold Freedman five years to complete and depicts transport from 1835 to 1935.

Earlier Mr. Hamer had been dogged by F19 Freeway protesters.

The demonstrators, carrying banners and yelling insults, followed him from Spencer Street

station to the Tramways Board in Bourke Street.

Other demonstrators had boarded a Bourke Street tram and hung banners out the windows.

They refused to pay the 16 per cent increase in public transport fares which came into effect on Sunday.

Despite the rain, spectators packed city streets to see the 600 vintage vehicles, including fire engines, cars and motorcycles, taking part in an historic cavalcade.

In CANBERRA the Prime Minister, Mr. Fraser, called on politicians to work together

rather than over-emphasising their differences.

They should be working to build on "those things that unite us all," he said in his Australia Day address to the nation.

He stressed the unity of Australians and their common values and aspirations in his message.

He said Australians had been through good times together, and helped each other through tough times. Through war and depression, through flood and, this summer, through bushfires and drought.

"We have experienced many things together. We have achieved a great deal," he said.

Among the values and aspirations Australians shared were the need to see the country grow and prosper and that everybody had a fair go, and the common commitment to freedom and protecting people from unfairness and injustice.

"But sometimes, we take all of this for granted.

"We give too much weight to division and conflict, when we should be acting together for common aims and objectives," he said.

"Politicians emphasise too much the differences they have with each other, when they should be working to build on those things that unite us all."

Mr. Fraser said it was part of his Government's vision for Australia's future to bring out the things we agree on, not to allow ourselves to be distracted by partisan interests and by sectional demands.

He said Australians had already achieved much working together as one people, but much remained to be done.

"This isn't just a task for government, it's a task for all Australians," he said.