

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT.
HON. HAROLD HOLT, M.P., IN THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES



16th MAY, 1967

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF COMMONWEALTH WAR
GRAVES COMMISSION

I wish to remind Honorable Members that 1967 marks the Fiftieth Anniversary of the establishment of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission which originally was known as the Imperial War Graves Commission.

In a few days' time, Australia will be represented by our High Commissioner in London at a special Fiftieth Anniversary meeting of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission presided over by His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester.

In more than 23,700 burial places throughout the world are the graves of nearly one and three quarter million men and women of the former Imperial Forces who died in the two World Wars. Of these, more than 100,000 were Australians.

All who have visited any of the war cemeteries must have been moved by their beauty and by the care with which they are tended. The efforts of many are involved, and to them I extend our thanks - to the architects, engineers, builders and horticulturalists who have created these places and to the researchers who so far as is humanly practicable, have made sure that each man and woman who died in the cause of freedom in either of the two World Wars has been honoured by name. I am sure it is a matter of pride to us all that our honoured dead are cared for in this way.

The Commission itself is a "Commonwealth" body formed by the member countries of the Commonwealth to honour their dead of the two World Wars. Each war cemetery, each memorial, each individual grave is a tribute paid jointly by a united Commonwealth of Nations. We take pride in the fact that Australia is an active partner in this organisation.

In this year of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the establishment of the Commission, we place on record our very sincere appreciation of the work that has been carried out, and still continues.

I have no doubt that this statement carries the support of all Members of the House.

I propose to send the President of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission a message in the following terms -

"On behalf of the Parliament and people of Australia I would like to express to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission our sincere appreciation for the manner in which it is carrying out the task of commemorating and honouring the dead of the two World Wars and to assure you of our continuing support and confidence in the future. On this Fiftieth Anniversary, the Commission can look back with a true sense of pride at its achievements over the years."