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VISIT BY APOLLO 11 ASTRONAUTS

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

The Apollo 11 astronauts - Neil Armstrong, Edwin Aldrin and Michael Collins - will visit Sydney on Saturday, 1 November in the course of their world tour embracing over 20 countries.

The astronauts, accompanied by their wives, will reach Sydney from Bangkok late on Friday night (31 October) and will leave for Guam early on the Sunday morning.

It is unfortunate they cannot spend more time in Australia and visit more than one city, but the United States has advised us that this programme must be adhered to because of their heavy world itinerary. Except for occasional rest days, their entire tour consists of one-day visits.

I am sure those Australians who can be in Sydney on Saturday, 1 November will give a warm welcome to these space-age explorers whose exploits caught the imagination of the world.

It would be my intention as Prime Minister to welcome them on their arrival, and the Commonwealth Government will give a Luncheon for them in Sydney on the Saturday. Other arrangements for their stay will be discussed with the New South Wales Government.

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CANBERRA  
20 September 1969

Background: The Prime Minister invited the astronauts to visit Australia in a congratulatory cable that was awaiting them when they were taken on board by U. S. S. "Hornet" following their recovery in the Pacific.