

FOR PRESS:

PM No. 25/1971

VICTORIAN FLOODS

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

The Prime Minister announced today that he had replied to the Victorian Premier's request for Commonwealth financial assistance with relief and restoration measures made necessary by the recent floods in that State.

The Commonwealth Government, being naturally concerned at the extent of the floods and sympathetic to those affected, has already offered to join with the State, on a dollar for dollar basis, in financing schemes for the relief of personal hardship and distress in the affected areas.

As to other relief or restoration measures, it is established Commonwealth policy that the financing of these is primarily the responsibility of State Governments. However, where the disaster is on such a scale that very large expenditures are required, the Commonwealth is normally prepared to assist.

The Premier has been informed that the Commonwealth is prepared to meet all natural disaster relief expenditure (other than the State's share of expenditure on relief of personal hardship and distress) on eligible relief measures in excess of \$3.5 million in 1970-71. Assistance is thus being offered on a similar basis to that for New South Wales where the Commonwealth has offered to meet all natural disaster relief expenditure in excess of \$5 million in 1970-71.

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CANBERRA  
22 February 1971