



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 130

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AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS - GOVERNMENT GRANT FOR WORLD DESIGN CONGRESS, JAPAN

The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, today announced an Australian Government grant of \$25,000 to assist 45 designers, teachers and students from all Australian States to attend the Eighth World Design Congress to be held next month in Kyoto, Japan.

The grant was recommended to the Prime Minister by the Visual Arts Board of the Australian Council for the Arts in consultation with the Industrial Design Council of Australia. The Congress has generated such wide interest among designers that a party of 64 Australians will now participate.

Sponsored by the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design, the Congress is held every second year and is being held for the first time in the Asian/Pacific area.

Those travelling with the aid of the subsidy represent a diverse range of interests. The group includes practising designers and design teachers from many fields, architects, a ceramist, and students in mechanical engineering, sculpture and painting as well as industrial design.

The Visual Arts Board, in recommending the grant, said that Australia has so far lacked a tradition of good local design in its industrial products. Although there have been talented individuals, they have not had sufficient support by way of professional training and steady demand for their work. Australian manufacturers have always leaned heavily on foreign design for their products. The Board believes that Australians are now taking more pride in what we can produce, and our international markets are demanding a high standard of design. Both for our own sake and for the sake of our export trade, we need excellence of design to become the rule rather than the exception.

In administering the \$25,000 grant, the Industrial-Design Council has made a particular effort to encourage student participation in the congress, and students comprise about half the number of people who have received travel subsidies.

Australian participation in this biennial design congress has previously been limited almost entirely to one or two official delegates. This year, for the first time, this country will participate in strength, representing about 10 per cent of the anticipated attendance of 600 overseas visitors from 35 countries. Some 1500 Japanese designers will bring the number attending the congress to around 2,000.

The World Design Congress provides a unique opportunity for the kind of international contact, discussion and exchange of ideas which are so vital to the development of designers individually and to the development of attitudes which will lead to the design of products with qualities more closely related to the everyday needs of people.

CANBERRA, A.C.T.