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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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APPOINTMENT OF AUSTRALIA'S FIRST WOMAN AMBASSADOR

The first appointment of a woman career diplomat as an Australian Ambassador overseas was announced today by the Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Whitlam.

She is Miss Ruth L. Dobson, at present Counsellor at the Australian Embassy in Athens. She is to become Australia's first resident Ambassador to Denmark, succeeding Dr L.D. Thomson, who, until now, has been dually accredited from The Hague.

Miss Dobson is one of 35 women diplomats in the Australian foreign service, most of whom have been recruited by the Department of Foreign Affairs since 1970.

Twenty currently occupy positions overseas, including two other senior posts, Deputy High Commissioner at the Australian High Commission in Suva and Counsellor at the Australian Embassy in Rome.

Mr Whitlam said that he regarded the first appointment of a woman career diplomat to an ambassadorial position as an important development in the growth and capacity of Australia's foreign service.

Her appointment, the Prime Minister added, also underlined Australia's wish to strengthen its relations with Denmark which had always been strong and cordial, and the importance Australia attached to its relations with the enlarged European Economic Community, of which Denmark had become a full member in January 1973.

Miss Dobson, who was born in Sydney, was educated at Frensham School, Mittagong, and the University of Sydney where she obtained a BA degree. She joined the Department of Foreign Affairs in 1943 and was attached to the then Division of Post Hostilities and the United Branch as a research officer.

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She was integrated into the diplomatic service in 1957 and from 1961 to 1963 served at the Australian High Commission in Wellington. She was promoted to First Secretary in 1962 and was the Department's Conference Officer from 1964 to 1965. Later, Miss Dobson was seconded to the Governor-General's staff as private secretary to Lady Casey, and from 1967 to 1968 served as First Secretary at the Australian Embassy in Manila. She was promoted to Counsellor in 1970 and during 1971 was in charge of the Department's Western Europe Section in Canberra.