



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

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### AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATION IN WESTERN SAMOA

The Prime Minister said today that amongst the matters he had discussed with the visiting Prime Minister of Western Samoa, Tupuola Efi, had been the proposed establishment of an Australian High Commission in Apia. Tupuola Efi had warmly welcomed the proposed Australian mission, which he said would greatly strengthen the existing close links between Australia and Western Samoa, by affording a direct channel of communication between the two Governments.

A firm date has not yet been set for opening the mission, but it will be operational in the 1977/78 financial year.

The Prime Minister said that the opening of a post in Apia would be a further step in the Government's continuing efforts to intensify Australia's relations with the countries of the South Pacific, both bilaterally and through such regional organisations as the South Pacific Forum and the South Pacific Commission. In addition to its general role in developing Australian relations with Western Samoa, the post would assist with the implementation of the Australian aid programme and provide consular services in respect of Australian residents, visitors and tourists.

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