



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

20 MAY, 1979

ISSUE OF NATIONAL FLAGS

The Prime Minister has written to Premiers and to the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, outlining the Government's decision to extend the free issue of the Australian Flag.

For many years the Government has issued the National Flag free to schools, orphanages, recognised youth organisations and National and State sporting bodies. This has helped to foster, particularly in young people, respect for and familiarity with the National Flag and a knowledge of its correct use.

In response to wide national interest in the flying of the Australian Flag the Government has decided to extend the official free-issue of the Flag. From 1 July the following additional groups will be eligible:

- . Community service groups, including ex-service organisations, Apex, Lions, Rotary, senior citizens' clubs, and the Country Women's Association;
- . Benevolent and welfare organisations including Red Cross and Legacy;
- . Homes for handicapped persons;
- . Church and religious bodies;
- . Ethnic organisations, and
- . Sporting clubs.

All requests for the National Flag should be made through a member of the Commonwealth Parliament.

It is estimated that nearly 2,000 free-issue flags will be distributed to eligible groups during the current financial year. This number will increase considerably when the new groups become eligible.

Arrangements are being made for tenders to be called with Australian Flag manufacturers for the supply of flags to meet the expected future demand. Funds will be allocated in the Budget for this need.

Since last November the Government has also been distributing free cassettes of special recordings of the National Anthem "God Save the Queen" and the National Tune "Advance Australia Fair" to the groups now eligible to receive the free-issue flag. As from 1 July this free issue of cassettes will be extended to those new groups eligible to receive the National Flag. Requests for these cassettes should also be made to a member of the Commonwealth Parliament.

The Government has also arranged for the production of new colour photographs of Her Majesty, the Queen for distribution within the community. These are new photographs showing the Queen wearing the insignia of the Sovereign Head of the Order of Australia. Copies of these photographs are available free to any group, association or person in the community who will display them in a proper and dignified manner. Requests can be made through a member of the Commonwealth Parliament or to the Department of my colleague, the Minister for Administrative Services who has separately announced that his Department will have responsibility for the distribution of all these items.

These are all matters which contribute to the identity of Australia as a nation. The Government's initiative in making them available serves to meet the wishes of the community.

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