



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

WEDNESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER, 1980

JULIUS DAM

The Prime Minister, Mr Malcolm Fraser, said today that, on return to office, his Government would provide \$250,000 to the City of Mount Isa to assist further in the debt servicing problems associated with the Julius Dam.

The Commonwealth has previously provided a loan of \$2 million to assist in the construction of the dam and provided a grant of \$325,000 to assist the Council in its borrowing program. It also allocated \$500,000 in 1978-79 and \$250,000 in 1979-80 to the Mount Isa City Council to reduce the debt burden of its loan commitments. Mr Fraser went on to say that the additional assistance that is now to be made available was further evidence of his Government's concern for the particular problems faced by people at Mount Isa who already incur very high water charges. It also demonstrates the clear commitment by the Commonwealth to the development of the north.

The Prime Minister said that Australia was universally recognised as a dry continent and water was an essential prerequisite to the development of the nation. This development could not occur unless the Commonwealth adopted a sympathetic and realistic attitude towards the difficulties faced by people in remote communities. The Government, by its actions, clearly demonstrates its concern to minimise the difficulties faced by such communities.

Mr Fraser concluded by noting the additional assistance to Mount Isa would be provided to Queensland, under the National Water Resources Program, to be forwarded to the City of Mount Isa.