



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

FRIDAY, APRIL 24 1981

OPENING OF THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA HIGH COMMISSION

I am honoured to be invited to participate on this historic and symbolic occasion.

High Commissioner Mr Sapias, thank you for asking me to join you at your Chancery - at your country's High Commission today. Sir Julius, I have been delighted to welcome you - and your daughter - personally to Canberra - and to say how welcome also are your distinguished colleagues and the senior representatives of your country who have done us the honour of being here today.

You and I, Sir Julius - and our Foreign Ministers - will later today be exchanging views on bilateral and international issues of current interest to our two countries. I look forward to being with you again later in the year at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Melbourne.

Australians are delighted by the fact that this is the first office which your Government has had specially designed and constructed in countries where you have diplomatic representation. This is an honour for Australia - an honour which my Government recognises and very much appreciates. We interpret your decision as one which deliberately symbolises the importance your Government places on our relationship. For our part, my Government will continue to attach the highest importance to that relationship.

I congratulate all those whose imagination, careful planning, and practical construction skills have contributed to these buildings. The use of traditional Papua New Guinea design - combined with functional simplicity - has produced a diplomatic mission of striking beauty - and one which contributes gracefully to the Canberra scene.

You have done us proud. The location of your High Commission amongst those of our friends and colleagues from Britain, New Zealand, Canada and Malaysia is symbolic of some very important strands in the foreign policies of our two countries.

There is firstly our association in the Commonwealth, a unique organisation which has long proved its ability to bring together leaders of a wide range of countries in consultation and in development of practical co-operation. There is the priority we both accord to close co-operation with our South Pacific neighbours.

Prime Minister, High Commissioner: This is a day of achievement in which we can feel great satisfaction. It is a day of celebration in which I know all your Australian friends here are delighted to join.

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