



PRIME MINISTER

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP

**VISIT TO AUSTRALIA BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES,
HIS EXCELLENCY FIDEL V RAMOS, 18-23 AUGUST**

I am very pleased that the President of the Philippines, His Excellency Fidel Ramos, will visit Australia from 18 to 23 August. This will be the first State visit to Australia by a President of the Philippines. The President will visit Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Darwin.

The visit underlines the increasingly warm and diverse relationship between our two countries and is an important opportunity to build it further.

The commercial relationship between Australia and the Philippines holds great potential. While bilateral trade grew by 15 per cent between 1993 and 1994, our economic links remain relatively underdeveloped. The significant program of economic reform which President Ramos has undertaken has stimulated economic growth in the Philippines and opened up significant new opportunities for Australian companies. I am pleased that President Ramos will be accompanied by a high-level business delegation and will participate in a number of major business seminars while in Australia.

The Philippines is the fourth largest recipient of Australian aid. We have a developing defence co-operation program.

Australia has a strong and active Filipino community, which I know is looking forward to welcoming President Ramos to Australia.

I look forward to discussing a wide range of bilateral and regional issues with President Ramos. In particular, we will discuss our common interest in APEC, of which the Philippines will be the chair in 1996.

CANBERRA

11 August 1995