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## **ACTING PRIME MINISTER**

**STATEMENT BY THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER, THE HON KIM BEAZLEY MP**

**RESIGNATION OF PRIME MINISTER MURAYAMA**

Prime Minister Murayama, who announced his resignation earlier today, made a major contribution to Japanese public life at an important time in Japan's history.

He presided during a period of unprecedented change in the Japanese political scene and of great economic challenges for Japan.

He showed dignity and leadership in encouraging Japan to come to terms with the country's wartime past, especially through his comments marking the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Those comments were appreciated in Australia and in the region.

His commitment to building a prosperous and stable future for the Asia-Pacific region was underlined by his leadership in APEC, including as chair of the most recent leaders' meeting in Osaka.

Prime Minister Murayama has also made a notable contribution to further building Australia's unique partnership with Japan. The Joint Declaration on the Australia-Japan Partnership by Prime Ministers Keating and Murayama last May provided an enduring statement of both countries' commitment to strengthening our bilateral ties, and to working together to promote prosperity, and to enhance political cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Australian Government appreciates Prime Minister Murayama's contribution and looks forward to working closely with his successor.

**MELBOURNE**  
**5 January 1996**