

FOR PRESS

AUSTRALIA AT EXPO 67

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Holt

Canada's Centennial Exposition, better known as Expo 67, will open in Montreal on Friday. This great display, officially styled the Montreal Universal and International Exhibition, is a central feature of Canada's celebration of her first hundred years of Confederation. The Exposition will remain open for six months.

Australia will be one of more than sixty nations represented. We have set up an impressive Australian Pavilion on the Exposition's man-made island site in the St. Lawrence River, opposite downtown Montreal. Our exhibits are installed, the Pavilion staff has been assembled and trained and arrangements have been completed for us to take part in the various cultural activities associated with Expo 67. These include the International Film Festival and the World Festival of Ballet and Music.

The whole Exposition is larger than the recent New York World Fair but is different in concept, presentation and management. The Exposition portrays, "Man and His World" - his endeavours in science, fine arts, exploration, agriculture and industry.

Australia's Special Day will be June 6 and I will be there for the occasion. As my colleague, the Postmaster-General, has already announced, arrangements have been made for a direct pioneering telecast to Australia by way of the satellite 'Telstar' of the special events of that day.

This is the first time Australia has taken part in such an international Exposition. The decision to do so was taken at a comparatively late stage and this imposed a demanding programme for planning and construction and called for special measures to ensure that we would be ready on time.

The theme of the Australian Pavilion follows carefully the theme of the Exposition. Design studies were undertaken by the Commonwealth Department of Works and in December, 1965, Cabinet selected a design by an architect of that Department, Mr. James Maccormick. Early in 1966, Cabinet approved proposals by the Exhibits Architect, Mr. Robin Boyd, and the general approach proposed by the Commissioner-General, on other forms of participation. The total cost is estimated to be \$3.14 million.

It is a matter of satisfaction that, despite the time factor, problems of distance and climate, and our lack of previous experience of such an exhibition, plans have been carried through and the Pavilion is ready to open on time with an effective presentation.

This has been possible only through the enthusiastic and purposeful work of the Commissioner-General, Sir Valston Hancock, and his team, and the wholehearted support which the Organisation has received from Commonwealth Departments and authorities, from the States, and from many private sources in industry and business throughout Australia.

The mounting of our exhibition is in fact a remarkable story of co-operation and enthusiasm. The Canadian authorities estimate that some two million visitors will pass through the Australian pavilion during the Exposition. Far larger numbers will, of course, be reached through specially arranged T.V., Radio and Press coverage of occasions including Australian presentations such as our Special Day. All this will promote greater .../2

international awareness of Australia, its achievements and its potential.

Throughout the Australian Pavilion the exhibits are, as far as possible, Australian made. Many of them have been manufactured in Australia for the first time from original designs.

The Pavilion is virtually a floating box, 136' square with two glassed-in sides, suspended above a typical Australian bushland setting. The mood created within it is one of space and tranquility. The Spirit of Adventure has been expressed through curving tree forms that support four independent roof sections.

The theme of Australia as the world's major wool producer is emphasised and an immense off-white carpet of natural wool covers the entire floor area and sweeps up two end walls to ceiling height. Twenty-two hostesses will wear costumes of golden wool designed in Australia. The uniforms of male attendants are also of wool.

There is a model of our great radio telescope at Parkes, an animated scale model of the Snowy Mountains Scheme, a scale model of Canberra.

There is a collection of contemporary Australian art and displays of aboriginal bark paintings and precious opals. In a series of photographic and physical exhibits all our great developmental projects, from mining to medical research and architecture are presented.

There is an unusual feature at the heart of the Pavilion, consisting of electronically operated sound chairs. There are 240 chairs, grouped about various exhibits. They have a built-in stereophonic sound system developed and produced in Australia enabling visitors to hear, as in personal discussion, the voices of notable Australians describing the exhibits.

The Pavilion is in a natural Australian setting, of gum trees - some up to 30' high - and other native trees and shrubs. There is a spectacular scientific display of over 1,000 pieces of coloured coral from the Great Barrier Reef. There is a billabong, a water hole, 20 kangaroos and 10 wallabies to make the atmosphere complete.

The Australian Ballet will give six performances in Montreal before leaving to tour South America and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra will give two performances. There will be a pop concert including well-known performers like the Seekers, and the Central Band of the Royal Australian Air Force will give several open-air concerts. A comprehensive programme of entertainments, including sheep dog trials, woodchopping, boomerang throwing, and an unofficial Davis Cup has been devised by Mr. Robert Helpmann for presentation at the Place des Nations on our Special Day.

I have every confidence that our staff in Montreal will acquit itself well. I am satisfied that the Exhibition will stand proudly among the best of all the national exhibitions, and I would hope that all Australians travelling abroad will take the opportunity of seeing it.

20TH APRIL, 1967.