

FOR PRESS:



P.M. No. 137/1967

PRIME MINISTER MISSING

Statement by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon.
John McEwen

The Australian people are aware that the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Harold Holt is missing off Portsea Beach. My information is that he was swimming this morning with a companion, Mr. Stewart, Director of the Fort Quarantine Station. Shortly after noon the two were separated in strong currents. At about 12.40 p.m., Mr Stewart reached the shore and raised the alarm.

A full-scale search and rescue operation was immediately mounted. The operation is continuing. It includes RAAF and civil aircraft and helicopters, police and naval units.

We will all pray that despite the grim situation, the Prime Minister may still be found safe.

This evening we all share with Mrs Holt and the family their terrible anxieties.

CANBERRA,
17th December, 1967