

FOR PRESS:



PM. NO. 16/1968

MORE FLOOD AID FOR NEW SOUTH WALES

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr John Gorton

The Commonwealth Government has agreed to a request from the New South Wales Government that it join with the State in providing \$50,000 on a dollar-for-dollar basis for the relief of personal hardship and distress suffered by people in the North Coast and North-West regions of New South Wales as a result of recent further major flooding in those areas.

It will be recalled that in June last year, the Commonwealth agreed to provide \$50,000 on a dollar-for-dollar basis with the State for this purpose, and an additional \$20,000 was made available in August following further flooding.

In addition to the immediate relief of distress, this total Commonwealth assistance of \$120,000 may be used for making essential repairs to houses and for repairing and replacing essential items of furniture and equipment to the extent necessary to provide reasonable living conditions for those who, due to lack of adequate financial resources, would otherwise suffer personal hardship.

In accordance with the constitutional division of responsibilities, provision of relief following natural disasters is a matter which falls within the province of the States. However, in recognition of the need on humanitarian grounds to take special action for the quick alleviation of individual cases of hardship, successive Commonwealth Governments have adopted the policy of assisting State Governments in financing relief schemes where the damage has been severe or widespread, but the initiative in setting up these schemes rests with the State concerned. The Commonwealth participates at the request of the State and on the basis of matching the amount of money which the State customarily makes available.

CANBERRA,
31st January, 1968.