

FOR PRESS:

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NEW HIGH COMMISSIONER TO NEW ZEALAND

The Prime Minister, The Rt. Hon. William McMahon, today announced the appointment of Senator the Honourable Dame Annabelle Rankin D. B. E. as the new Australian High Commissioner to New Zealand.

Mr. McMahon said "As Foreign Minister, I had had discussions with Dame Annabelle about the possibility of her accepting a diplomatic appointment. She then informed me that she would be interested in a diplomatic post should a suitable one become vacant.

Dame Annabelle and I have again discussed the appointment and we have agreed that she should become the Australian High Commissioner in Wellington.

I have already discussed the appointment with the New Zealand Prime Minister, Sir Keith Holyoake who welcomes the appointment of a member of the Ministry as High Commissioner.

Dame Annabelle will be the first Australian woman to be appointed as Head of an Australian Diplomatic Mission.

She will succeed Sir Edwin Hicks, formerly Secretary of the Defence Department whose three year term as High Commissioner expired on 1st March."

Mr. McMahon paid warm tribute to Dame Annabelle's distinguished Parliamentary career both as a Senator and a Minister. She was the first Queensland woman to enter the Federal Parliament. She had been a Senator since 1946 and a Minister since 1966.

Mr. McMahon said "I know she will make a unique contribution to the very friendly relations that exist between our two countries".

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CANBERRA  
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