

FOR PRESS

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INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR ACTION TO COMBAT RACISM  
AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The Prime Minister, Mr. William McMahon, said today that the year 1971 would be observed in Australia as International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination.

Mr. McMahon said:

"The General Assembly of the United Nations designated the year 1971 as International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination in the same way as it had designated 1968 as Human Rights Year and 1965 as International Co-operation Year.

"Australian subscribes fully to the purpose of this Year which is to achieve significant progress in eliminating all forms and manifestations of racial discrimination. We voted in support of this resolution at the General Assembly and we are taking steps to observe it.

Mr McMahon added : "My Government abhors racism which is not acceptable to the Australian way of life. "

Mr McMahon said he was pleased that a number of non-governmental organisations interested in the Year had decided to set up a National Committee to organise a programme to observe it. The Commonwealth had made a grant of \$12,000 to the Committee to assist it with its programme. He had been informed that a major part of the Committee's work would be educational. This he felt was most important. Education through teaching and the mass media was one of the most powerful weapons to combat prejudice based on ignorance.

Mr McMahon added that the Government was already a party to some of the conventions bearing upon the elimination of racial discrimination, such as the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the 1956 Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education. Australia had also signed the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the question of ratification of that Convention was being carefully examined.

Mr McMahon concluded by wishing the Committee a successful Year. He was hopeful that Australia and Australians would be able to make an effective contribution to the objectives of the Year.

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CANBERRA  
22 March 1971