



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS:

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### COMMONWEALTH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

### FOR WEST AUSTRALIAN STATE SHIPPING SERVICE TO DARWIN

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. William McMahon, CP, MP.

The Commonwealth has agreed to provide an interest-free non-repayable capital grant of \$2½ million to the Western Australian Government for the purchase of a ship to service the Darwin trade.

The Commonwealth accepts this provision of assistance as a special case justified by the importance of the Darwin trade to Western Australia, and by the importance to the Northern Territory of trade arrangements with Western Australian suppliers. The trade has been built up over some years and encouraged by the former Western Australian Government. If this trade were to cease, it would be replaced in the North by imports, and employment in Western Australian industries, such as the timber industry of the South-West, would suffer.

The provision of the grant will ensure the continuance of the regular weekly shipping service to Darwin. The new ship will permit more efficient operations and the continuation of the service will help to restrain increases in transportation costs to the Northern Territory which might otherwise occur.

CANBERRA  
9 March 1972