



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS:

PM's 91/1972

### AUSTRALIA HOUSE

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

Arrangements are now in hand to enable transfer of responsibility for the administration of the Australian High Commission, London, to the Department of Foreign Affairs as from 1 November 1972.

The decision was made some months ago. I discussed it with the British Prime Minister, MR Heath, during my visit to London last year, and the transfer was referred to by my colleague, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the course of a statement on Australian foreign policy presented to the Parliament on 9 May 1972.

This decision to transfer responsibility for Australia House does not in any way change the special relationship which the Australian people and their successive Governments have with Britain and British Governments - a relationship symbolised and exemplified by the link with the Crown.

It takes place against the background of Britain's entry into Europe. The resulting interaction between Britain's policies and those of her European partners will impose new demands for a detailed understanding by Australia in areas which are in large part the concern of the Minister and Department of Foreign Affairs.

I want to express publicly my gratitude to the Australian High Commissioner and all those employed by Australia House in London, for the excellent service they have given to the Australian Government and people while Australia House has been under my administration and that of my predecessors over the past 60 years. The same devotion and quality of service will of course continue as Australia House passes under the administration of the Foreign Minister and his Department.

The Australian High Commissioner in London will continue to be appointed by the Prime Minister, in consultation with the Foreign Minister, and the organisational arrangements being made will permit continuance of the channels of direct communication which exist between the Prime Ministers of Great Britain and Australia and through their respective High Commissioners.

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CANBERRA  
25 October 1972