



PRIME MINISTER

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VISIT TO INDONESIA

The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. E.G. Whitlam, announced today that he would make an official visit to Indonesia from 20 to 23 February inclusive.

Mr. Whitlam said that he would fly to Port Moresby on 18 February and from there to Jakarta, with a brief stop en route at Bali.

He would be accompanied by Mrs. Whitlam.

Mr. Whitlam said that he looked forward to the visit to Indonesia with keen interest.

"It is appropriate that my first visit overseas, after my meetings with the leaders of New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, should be to Indonesia," he said.

"Because of its proximity to Australia and Papua New Guinea, and because of its size and influence in the region, Indonesia is of major and permanent importance to Australia.

"I have already stated my Government's intention to develop and strengthen our relations with Indonesia. And I know from my personal contacts with the Indonesian leaders that this wish is reciprocated.

"The futures of our countries are indissolubly linked together and our relationship will be a crucial factor in determining the future of our region for the rest of this century".

Mr. Whitlam added: "I am only sorry that the amount of work facing me at home prevents me at present from extending this visit to our other neighbours in the region who also have a very important place in Australia's international relations".

CANBERRA