



**DEPARTMENT OF
FOREIGN
AFFAIRS**

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CREATION OF A SECOND ASIA DIVISION
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Whitlam, announced today that a second Asia Division would be established within the Department of Foreign Affairs.

It is expected that the new Division will become operational in April.

Until now, there has been only one Division in the Department dealing with the whole Asian Continent.

The new divisional structure will enable the Department to handle more effectively the work-load and policy requirements of Australia's relations with Asia.

One of the Asia Divisions will be responsible for North and West Asia and the other for South Asia, including South-East Asia.

In addition to some rearrangement of Branch and Sectional responsibilities the changes also involve the creation of a new Branch

and a special Section to deal with regional developments.

Mr Whitlam said: "I have emphasised, both before assuming office and since, the importance of achieving an independent stance in Australia's foreign policy and the importance we attach to Australia's position in the Asian/Pacific region.

"The structural changes which have been introduced into the Department of Foreign Affairs are intended to facilitate the implementation of the foreign policy initiatives which I have decided to introduce.

"The establishment of relations with China will entail increased effort particularly at the policy level. Our expanding relations with Japan also require increased attention. The same will be true with regard to my priorities for the development of relations with Indonesia within the wider South-East Asian context.

"I have also announced my intention of seeking new forms of regional co-operation geared to the situation in the Asia/Pacific area following the Viet-Nam ceasefire, and to the realities of the 70s."