



**DEPARTMENT OF
FOREIGN
AFFAIRS**

NO

M/91

DATE

4 June 1973

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY

The following is the text of a statement to mark the first World Environment Day (tomorrow, 5 June 1973) by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Whitlam, and sent to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program:-

"The annual celebration of a World Environment Day is an occasion to take stock of the effectiveness of the policies and programs instituted by the United Nations and governments for the protection and improvement of the human environment.

In associating Australia with the celebration of the first World Environment Day, one year after the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, I confirm my Government's support for the principles and declaration of Stockholm and Australia's intention to pursue international and domestic policies which are in full harmony with the results and achievements of the Stockholm Conference.

My Government, conscious of the need for the Australian people to be protected against major hazards to the environment, has created three new Departments - Environment and Conservation, Tourism and Recreation, and Urban and Regional Development, which,

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in co-operation with other Australian Government agencies and the authorities in the Australian States, are working towards ensuring that Australians will continue to enjoy the nation's natural and cultural heritage.

We have established a Task Force on the National Estate. The Task Force will advise the Australian Government on additional measures and policies for the preservation and enhancement of features such as historic buildings and towns, urban parks and scenic reserves and areas along the coastline. The Australian Parliament has established a Committee on the Environment and Conservation.

We are developing an environmental impact statement procedure, the objective of which is to ensure that full account is taken of the environmental impact of all proposed developments. We expect that the implementation of this policy will be a most significant innovation in the process of government in Australia.

The people of Australia and the Pacific area are currently faced by a serious threat to their environment from nuclear weapons testing in the atmosphere. Principle 26 of the Stockholm Conference declared that 'man and his environment must be spared the effects of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction'. The Australian Government strongly endorses this principle and our policy is directed towards ensuring that present and succeeding generations will be spared the harmful consequences of contamination of the environment resulting from nuclear weapons testing.

Australia intends to play a positive and constructive role in the work of the Governing Council for Environmental Programs in keeping with the Council's responsibility as the major forum for continuing international discussion of environmental problems.

It is of particular importance that priority attention be given to the conservation of wildlife which is so essential inter alia for the preservation of the ecological balance.

Australia welcomes the drawing up of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna and we have also recently announced that we intend to join the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Australia, I wish the United Nations every success in its efforts to develop effective practical measures of international co-operation for the preservation and enhancement of the environment."