



# PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 167

31 December 1973

## NEW YEAR MESSAGE

I wish all Australians a happy and prosperous year in 1974.

The year just ending began on a note of great hope for Australia and her region with the signing of a ceasefire in Vietnam and a withdrawal of Australian and American forces from Indo-China. Relations between the major powers have continued to improve, despite some outbreaks which were temporarily beyond their control.

The New Year, however, brings with it risks and challenges of a different kind and on a different scale. The industrial nations of the West - our friends in the United States, Europe, Britain and Japan - face an energy crisis that has already significantly affected their economic prospects and traditional standards and habits of living. The energy shortage will be the paramount concern, the over-riding reality, for the world's statesmen in the year ahead.

Australia is immensely fortunate that she has been able to avoid - internally at least - the worst effects of the energy shortage. It would be foolish to pretend however that we can isolate ourselves completely or indefinitely from its effects. There are bound to be problems of readjustment for us.

The Australian people now have a Government committed firmly to maximum Australian ownership and control of our precious resources of minerals and energy. We will never allow these resources to pass further into overseas hands. We are committed, through our plans for a Petroleum and Minerals Authority, to undertake a massive search for new resources which the Australian people will control. Once we are assured of our own energy requirements we will be a generous and dependable supplier to our customers overseas.

I am confident that 1974 will bring even greater progress and prosperity to Australians.

Our important plans for education, health and the cities will go forward. We will give special priority to the care of the very young and the old - those who have not yet entered school and those who have ceased to work.

Our efforts for a more just society at home, for greater equality of opportunity for all Australians, will equip us better for the task of working to redress the massive inequalities and injustices in the world at large - not least in our own region.

CANBERRA, A.C.T.