



**DEPARTMENT OF
FOREIGN
AFFAIRS**

NO

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RICE AID TO INDONESIA

The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr E.G. Whitlam, today announced that the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, Mr R.W. Furlonger, had yesterday informed President Suharto that Australia would supply Indonesia with \$2.5 million of rice to help alleviate the severe shortage in Indonesia caused by drought.

Mr Whitlam said about 20,000 tons of rice would be purchased on the international market and supplied to Indonesia as soon as possible. He added Australia was assisting Indonesia in this way because the current adverse conditions in Australia meant that Australian producers would not be in a position to supply rice in the quantity needed until after the April 1973 harvest.

Mr Whitlam said this gift was in addition to the 74,000 tons of wheat and 5,000 tons of rice which Australia had already agreed to give to Indonesia.

Mr Whitlam also revealed that he had sent a personal message to President Suharto through Mr Furlonger.