



DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

NO

DATE

M/12

22 December 1972

EMBARGO: Not to be used in any
form before 6 p.m. on
22 December 1972.

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr E.G. Whitlam, released today the text of a joint communique announcing the establishment of diplomatic relations with the German Democratic Republic. Following is the text of the joint communique:

"The Government of Australia and the Government of the German Democratic Republic have today decided to establish diplomatic relations at Ambassadorial level.

"In reaching this decision both Governments were prompted by a desire to promote friendly co-operation to the mutual advantage of both countries.

"The timing of the exchange of diplomatic representatives will be the subject of further consultation between the two Governments."

PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE

19 DECEMBER

RELATIONS WITH EAST GERMANY

Prime Minister: I have instructed the Australian Ambassador in Moscow to have discussions with this East German colleague there about the early establishment of diplomatic relations between Australia and the German Democratic Republic. These discussions are in progress,

Following the recent moves between West and East Germany to normalise their relations, I consider it is important both for political and commercial reasons for Australia to normalise its own relations with East Germany. Apart from facilitating trade in both directions, Australian recognition of East Germany would, when agreement is reached, make people in Europe more aware that there is a new government in Australia which is not concentrating on South East Asia and the Pacific to the exclusion of our highly important relations with Europe.

I would also make the point that in opening discussions with the GDR I am seeking to avoid situations in which Australia takes general decisions in international affairs late. I would rather see Australia in the vanguard than in the rearguard in coming to its own foreign policy decisions.