



PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No. 197

7 March 1974

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day will be observed tomorrow. It is an appropriate time for me to draw attention to the need for continued efforts to remove discrimination against women.

It is a fundamental objective of the Government to ensure respect for civil liberties and human rights and for that reason the Government is committed to the promotion of equal rights for women. Since coming to office, the Government has removed discriminatory provisions against women employed in the Australian Public Service and has extended eligibility for social security benefits to many women formerly excluded on various discriminatory grounds. The appointment of an adviser on women's affairs to my staff also reflected the importance which the Government attaches to the improvement of the status of women in Australia.

The Government is seeking the extension of the minimum wage to adult female employees in the National Wage Case presently before the Arbitration Commission.

I welcome the United Nations decision to designate 1975 as International Women's Year in order to encourage equality of opportunity for women and improve their status throughout the world. The Government is preparing an official program for International Women's Year.

I pay tribute to the work of women's groups throughout Australia in seeking to use International Women's Day and International Women's Year to draw attention to the achievement of women and the need to raise their status of women in the community.

The Government will ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as the U.N. Convention on the Political Rights of Women as soon as enabling legislation has been passed. Ratification of these legal instruments will be an important contribution to the enforcement of human rights in Australia, including the rights of women. Australia's ratification of the International Labour Organisation Convention III on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) in June 1973 highlighted the Government's adoption of a national policy to eliminate discrimination in employment and occupation. Committees have been established, in accordance with the Convention, to work for the ending of all such discrimination. A community education campaign will be launched soon to dramatize discriminatory attitudes and practices in Australia. This action, while seeking to ensure equality of opportunity in employment for all, will be of special significance to women in the workforce.

C ANBERRA. A.C.T.