



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 229

18 April 1974

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL ANTHEM

"Advance Australia Fair" will be played as the Australian National Anthem at this year's official Anzac Day ceremony in Canberra. The Prime Minister announced this in Canberra today.

Mr. Whitlam said he had asked the Minister for Defence to instruct the Armed Services to play "Advance Australia Fair" on all appropriate occasions. He had also written to other Ministers asking them to give similar instructions to all departments and Government bodies for which they were responsible.

These arrangements were being made following the National Anthem poll conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The results of the poll, which he announced in Parliament on 8 April, clearly indicated that a majority of Australians wanted "Advance Australia Fair" as the National Anthem.

Mr. Whitlam said the poll result accurately reflected the will of the people. Opinion polls had shown for many years that an increasing majority of Australians - as many as 80 per cent - wanted a distinctive Australian anthem to replace "God Save The Queen". He had promised such an anthem during the last election campaign. The survey by the Bureau of Statistics was the most thorough and exhaustive ever conducted. The sample was 30 times as large as the average private opinion poll. Mr. Whitlam said the enormous response to last year's national anthem competition, for which more than 1,200 entries were received, showed the depth of public feeling on this issue. Australia now had a distinctive and familiar anthem with strong traditional associations.

He stressed that the survey related only to the music of "Advance Australia Fair". Words for the tune existed but they were not regarded as part of the official anthem. The Government had always taken the view that it was the music that mattered.

Mr. Whitlam said he hoped that at all Anzac Day ceremonies, the opportunity would be taken throughout Australia to play "Advance Australia Fair" in recognition of the people's wishes.

He added that on occasions when the Queen was present, or when it was especially important to acknowledge our links with the Queen as Queen of Australia and Head of the Commonwealth, "God Save The Queen" would be played as well as the National Anthem.