



## PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 292

1 August 1974

### REVISED AUSTRALIAN VISA POLICY

The Australian Government has informed the Governments of the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, New Zealand and Fiji that it has decided to require all persons entering Australia for settlement or temporary stay to obtain visas.

This will remove a long-standing discriminatory practice from Australia's immigration policy. For over 70 years European British subjects (now Commonwealth citizens) and Irish citizens have been able to enter Australia without visa formalities, whereas non-European Commonwealth citizens from the same countries have been required to undergo visa formalities.

This preferential treatment afforded European over non-European Commonwealth citizens is wholly inconsistent with the Australian Government's non-discriminatory immigration policy. From 1 January 1975 therefore Commonwealth citizens of European descent and Irish citizens coming to Australia for any period, whether for a visit or settlement, will be required to obtain visas just as non-European people and European aliens do.

As well as removing a discriminatory practice from Australia's immigration policy, the visa requirement will provide a distinct strengthening of Australia's control of travellers. At present those exempted represent a significant proportion of people entering each year and come here without any form of prior checking as to health or character. It will also provide a manpower planning control which has been absent in the past.

The only continuing exception to the visa requirement will be travellers already covered by the reciprocal arrangements existing between the New Zealand and Australian Governments. As agreed between the two Governments, there will be continuing consultation between officers to review the operation of these arrangements.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.