



PRIME MINISTER

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DEATH OF NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER

Norman Kirk's death is a deeply tragic loss for New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific region.

New Zealand has lost a great leader. Australia has lost a firm friend. The Pacific and South East Asian region has lost a forceful and creative spokesman. The cause of democratic socialism throughout the world has lost one of its pillars of strength and sources of inspiration.

I have lost a dear and most highly valued friend. We share a common ground of political experience in good times and bad and an identity of basic beliefs which gave a closeness and value to our personal relationship quite beyond the ordinary.

We became Prime Ministers of the two Pacific partners within a week of one another and since that time have maintained the closest communications including our five meetings in Wellington, Apia, Ottawa, Canberra and Christchurch.

Under his Prime Ministership relations between New Zealand and Australia reached an even higher level of co-operation and understanding. We co-operated particularly closely in our opposition to nuclear tests in the Pacific.

He achieved for New Zealand a position of genuine leadership in the south west Pacific. He did this not only by the nobility of his vision for his nation and the region but by the personal qualities of integrity, compassion and sturdy commonsense which earned him the confidence and affection of all who had the privilege of working with him.

On behalf of all Australians I extend to our New Zealand partners our deepest sympathy in the grievous loss we have all suffered.