



PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No. 337

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PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE COOK ISLANDS

The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, announced in Canberra today that he would be visiting the Cook Islands and participating briefly in the South Pacific Conference, which is being held there from 25 September to 7 October 1974. He will be in Rarotonga from 26-27 September, en route to the United States to begin his North American visit.

The Australian delegation to the South Pacific Conference will be led by the Minister for Science, Mr. Morrison. Senators C.G. Primmer and N.T. Bonner will also attend the Conference as Parliamentary Observers.

The 1974 Conference will meet under new arrangements agreed on earlier this year. These arrangements resulted from an initiative by the Australian Foreign Minister, Senator Willesee, to broaden and strengthen the Conference.

Mr. Whitlam said that Australia attaches importance to the South Pacific Conference as the one body which embraces all Pacific Island communities and those countries which still have direct responsibilities in the area. He said Australia saw its role in the South Pacific as one of co-operation and good neighbourliness. To this end Australia supported the Conference in its many activities directed towards the economic and social development of the region.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.