



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 417

17 December 1974

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

The Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, announced today the recipients of the first set of grants to be made for special activities during International Women's Year, 1975.

He stated that he had approved the grants on the advice of the Australian National Advisory Committee for International Women's Year. This would be the first of a series of grants to be made for the Year and reflected the areas of special priority determined by the Committee and set out in the paper for discussion tabled in both Houses of Parliament on 4 December 1974. Detailed arrangements are subject to negotiation with the individuals and groups concerned.

General Community Attitudes

- . Australian Council of Churches - Status of Women Commission (N.S.W.)

The Australian Council of Churches in June 1973 established a Commission on the Status of Women to investigate the status and role of women in the church and society, to remove discrimination on the grounds of sex and to stimulate the full participation of women in the church and society. During 1975, the Commission will hold a national conference, a regional conference involving women from Papua New Guinea, Pacific Islands, New Zealand and Australia and a seminar for clergy; will undertake a study on the history of women in the church; and will produce various publications and visual displays.

- . Gwen Wesson - La Trobe University (Victoria)

Ms Wesson has collected the writings (poems, essays, short stories) of suburban housewives, to be published in a book as unedited expressions of women in the process of resocialisation as they move from the domination of housewifery.

- . Australia '75 (Canberra)

This festival, to be held in Canberra in March, will feature a Baroque to Rock Concert, featuring women artists; the reading of songs and poetry by Dorothy Hewett; and a stage portrayal of pioneer women in Australia by Nita Pannell.

. National Council of Women of Tasmania

The Council will hold a one-day seminar in May 1975 to focus attention on the importance of women in all walks of life taking an active part in the processes of government at all levels, to encourage the increased participation of women in government.

Health and Welfare

. Fitzroy Accommodation Service (Victoria)

The Fitzroy Accommodation Service will receive an interim grant to enable it to continue to assist homeless women and men find suitable accommodation until the Department of Housing and Construction is in a position to fund it. The majority of such demands for assistance are made by women.

. Committee for the Liverpool Women's Health and Resources Centre (N.S.W.)

Interim funding is to be provided to enable the establishment of a multi-purpose women's centre consisting of a refuge shelter for women in urgent and desparate need, and a medical/recreational/educational centre with child minding facilities.

. Western Australian Institute of Technology

A grant has been approved to enable women with low incomes to attend a one-day seminar on "Women from Minority Groups" which will involve women from various minorities (aboriginal, ethnic, single mothers, physically and emotionally handicapped, etc.)

Education

. Footscray Institute of Technology (Victoria)

The Institute will prepare leaflets to attract women to engineering, against obvious Australian prejudice to the contrary, and will offer an orientation course to women who have felt that their knowledge of technological terminology has been inadequate compared to that of men. It is hoped that their action will attract some women to enter the profession of engineering who would otherwise have gone to a profession of their second preference.

Work

. Anne Conlon and Edna Ryan (N.S.W.)

Ms Conlon and Ms Ryan have written a book, The Gentle Invaders - Australian Women at Work 1788-1974, on women's participation in the labour force since Australia was founded. It describes the arbitration system and gives the background to wage fixation in Australia with particular reference to women.

Creativity

. Joan Long (N.S.W.)

A grant will assist in the production of a feature film based on the book Caddie, an autobiography set in 1925-32 about a woman on her own, her struggle to support herself and her children, of the attitudes of the society and of her efforts to adjust and survive.

. Women's Theatre Group (Victoria)

This group of women uses theatre to show the oppression of women in society, to challenge sex roles, and to create new styles and new images for women. Their 1975 program will include community performances, performances in schools and places of work, and a country tour.

The Prime Minister also announced that the Australian National Advisory Committee, which is composed of individuals chosen from the community and do not represent any organisation, state or sectional group, recognised the great value and need to actively involve women's groups in International Women's Year. Accordingly in view of the long association of the United Nations Association of Australia in United Nations Years he intended to make grants to the forum of women's groups at both national and state level constituted by the United Nations Association of Australia - the United Nations Association of Australia Committees for International Women's Year. These grants would enable the Committees to meet throughout the Year and engage in specified activities. It was expected that the Committees would carry out these activities within the context of the objectives formulated by the National Advisory Committee.

The Prime Minister also announced that Australia had contributed \$US40,000 towards the United Nations Voluntary Fund for International Women's Year. This will enable the United Nations to carry out its own activities during the year which include a world conference on the theme of Equality, Development and Peace to be held in Mexico in June 1975, an inter-regional conference on The Communication of Attitudes: Women, The Arts and The Media to be held in Australia in November-December 1975, and the publication of a wide range of material relating to the Year.

CANBERRA, A.C.T.