



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 429

7 January, 1975

OFFER OF INDONESIAN ASSISTANCE TO DARWIN

The Prime Minister's office today released the text of the Prime Minister's response to President Soeharto's offer of Indonesian assistance to Darwin.

"Thank you very much indeed for your kind message of sympathy about the Darwin disaster. It was the worst natural disaster we have suffered in our history. The prompt expression of the sympathy of the people and government of Indonesia will be long remembered by those in Australia most affected by the disaster.

I have been informed by our Charge d'Affaires in Jakarta of Indonesia's generous offer of two C-130 aircraft to assist with the emergency operation. I personally very much appreciate this gesture coming from our closest and largest neighbour. As I understand has been explained to your foreign ministry the immediate evacuation crisis in Darwin is now over, and with it, the immediate need for additional airlift capacity.

It is possible that the demand for aircraft could increase again as the reconstruction phase gets underway, and, if so, I hope that we will be able to avail ourselves of your most helpful offer which I deeply appreciate. E.G. Whitlam."

CANBERRA, A.C.T.