



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 531
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I.W. Y. CONFERENCE - WOMEN & POLITICS

Australia's already significant contribution to International Women's Year would achieve new goals with a major conference on women and politics to be held in Canberra soon, the Prime Minister, the Hon. E. G. Whitlam, announced today.

Mr Whitlam said the Women and Politics Conference would be held at the Australian National University, Canberra, from August 30 to September 6.

It would bring together women from all over Australia and selected speakers from overseas to create a greater understanding of the means by which women could participate in the making of political decisions. The Conference also would highlight the difficulties confronting women who desired to be politically active.

Mr Whitlam said that already Australia's efforts in International Women's Year were receiving world-wide attention. This new Conference, to which both women and men were being invited, would be an historic event for Australia's women and for Australia's politics.

He said that both traditional and new viewpoints were being sought and the Conference would be a focal point of exchange of ideas between those who had previously been politically active and those who would like to be.

It would be an opportunity for women from other nations to share their experiences in achieving significant social and political change within their own communities. About 20 outstanding women from overseas will participate.

And ultimately, it would be the base from which women themselves can launch a renewed attack on community attitudes now preventing them from playing their full role in creating a more humane, a more compassionate society.

Mr Whitlam said the intention of the International Women's Year Secretariat at the Conference was to seek both traditional and new viewpoints. Emphasis would be on individuals and not on organisations and it was hoped that people from all walks of life would attend. Delegates would become agents of awareness after the Conference, returning to their communities with experience which will help dissipate some of the taboos surrounding women's participation in community decision-making.

Long distance air fares and accommodation were being subsidised by the Australian Government to encourage women from far flung communities, including aborigines, to take part. A maximum return economy fare of \$52.40 would be payable and accommodation at Australian National University halls of residence would be \$35 for the conference week. Registration fee was \$10.

Mr Whitlam said those interested in attending should apply in writing to the Women and Politics Conference Office, P. O. Box 725, Canberra City, A.C.T. 2601, for an application form.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.