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PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

9 JUNE 1976

U.S. BICENTENNIAL - GIFT OF KOALA BEARS

Australia will present six Koala Bears to the people of America as part of our programme for the celebration of the U.S. Bicentennial.

The bears which have been bred in captivity at the Lone Pine Sanctuary in Brisbane, will be housed at the renowned San Diego Zoo in California, where they will be seen by 3,500,000 people who visit the Zoo each year.

An initial gift of Koalas was made to the zoo in the early 1950's but with the passage of time the colony was now reduced to three aged female Bears.

The San Diego climate is well suited to the Bears and there are plenty of eucalyptus trees to provide food.

The San Diego Zoo has an excellent record of caring for its colony of Koalas.

Present plans are for the bears to travel with their keepers by Qantas aircraft late in July.

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