



**PRIME MINISTER**

FOR PRESS

10 MARCH 1977

COMMONWEALTH DAY 1977

The fourteenth of March 1977 will be the first occasion on which member countries of the Commonwealth will simultaneously celebrate Commonwealth Day.

Previously Commonwealth Day was celebrated in Australia on the second Saturday in June in conjunction with The Queen's Official Birthday celebrations. The new date for Commonwealth Day, the second Monday in March of each year, has been chosen so that the Commonwealth as a whole is able to celebrate its common heritage on the same day and increase public understanding of the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Day presents a unique opportunity for Australians to re-affirm their commitment to the Commonwealth association and to gain a better understanding and knowledge of Commonwealth affairs. We, in Australia, are most fortunate that this year's celebration of Commonwealth Day will coincide with the visit by Her Majesty The Queen.

I expect that State Governments and the many Commonwealth Societies will arrange appropriate functions and that educational authorities will ensure the significance of the day is adequately celebrated in schools.

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