



PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

14 JULY 1977

RESIGNATION OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL
AND APPOINTMENT OF HIS SUCCESSOR

The following announcement has been made from Buckingham Palace -

"It is announced from Buckingham Palace that The Queen has accepted the resignation of The Right Honourable Sir John Kerr, A.K., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., K.St.J., Q.C., as Governor-General of Australia, with effect from December, 1977.

On the advice of the Prime Minister of Australia, Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to approve the appointment of Sir Zelman Cowen, C.M.G., Q.C., as Governor-General, to succeed Sir John Kerr."

Canberra



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RESIGNATION OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

The announcement of Her Majesty's acceptance of Sir John Kerr's resignation as Governor-General of Australia is occasion for me to record publicly, with respect and appreciation, Australia's debt to Sir John for his service in high office, including through a difficult period in Australia's constitutional history.

Sir John will relinquish his appointment in December after more than three years as Governor-General and after service under two Governments. In that period he has travelled widely in Australia and, with Lady Kerr, has associated his office with community groups and state and national associations across the whole spectrum of Australian life. It is also appropriate for me to place on record Sir John's work as first Chancellor of the Order of Australia.

Sir John steps down because he himself has asked leave to do so. He feels that the events of 1975 and the association of his office with issues of state which arose at that time evoked partisan feelings in the Australian community which have now substantially subsided but which nevertheless left feelings which might be resolved more quickly if he now makes way for a successor. He believes too that he has completed an important phase in his own life.

Focus on controversial issues at times has tended to obscure the measure of support that Sir John has always had, and the office of Governor-General has always had, from the large majority of the Australian community. It is to the great credit of both Sir John and Lady Kerr that extreme elements in the community were faced up to and overcome and both can look back on this with a sense of satisfaction and achievement. Sir John's leadership was a service to his office, to the Monarchy, and to the country.

No Governor-General could have relished the position that Sir John found himself in in 1975 but it must be accepted that in the constitutional circumstances then existing Sir John acted in the only way that the high duties of his office allowed him to act.

Sir John's request now to relinquish his appointment and the reasons that have led him to this decision accord with the high sense of public responsibility and statesmanship that he has always demonstrated. He maintained a dignity and purpose in his appointment and history will come increasingly to recognise the debt that Australia owes to his resoluteness in public office.

In his term as Governor-General Sir John has had the respect of people from all walks of Australian life and he has, with the support of Lady Kerr undertaken his duties at all times with the highest responsibility.

Australia and Australians are grateful to Sir John and we extend best wishes to him and to Lady Kerr.

Canberra