



F77/168

PRIME MINISTERFOR PRESS3 AUGUST 1977DEATH OF PRESIDENT MAKARIOS

I wish to express profound regret at the news of the death of His Beatitude Archbishop Makarios III, President of the Republic of Cyprus. In Archbishop Makarios, the world and the Commonwealth have lost a statesman of great eminence who had long personified his people's quest for identity and independence, and had played a unique role in his country's national and international affairs.

I was honoured to meet privately with President Makarios during the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in London and at that meeting to renew an invitation to him to make a State Visit to Australia. This visit would have been a fitting culmination to the development of the longstanding and excellent relations between Australia and Cyprus, which is the original homeland of so many Australians.

The Government had greatly looked forward to this visit by President Makarios later this year, and I am sure all Australians will share my sadness that it cannot take place.

I have conveyed to the Acting President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Kyprianou, on behalf of the Government and the people of Australia, an expression of deep sympathy with the Government and the people of Cyprus at the loss of their President.