



F77/176

## PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

16 AUGUST 1977

### DEATH OF PRESIDENT MAKARIOS

---

It is with deep regret that I inform the House of the death on 3 August 1977 of His Beatitude Archbishop Makarios III, President of the Republic of Cyprus.

I move: that the House records its sincere regret at the death of His Beatitude Archbishop Makarios III, President of the Republic of Cyprus and expresses its profound sympathy to the people of Cyprus.

Following the news of his death, the Governor General and I sent messages of condolence to the Acting President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Spyros Kyprianou, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr John Christophides.

The Australian Government was represented at the President's funeral by the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. The Leader of the Opposition and our High Commissioner to the Republic of Cyprus were also present.

The late President was the inspiration of the modern state of Cyprus and represented it in the world community with wisdom and distinction. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1938. On his return to Cyprus in 1948, he was consecrated bishop and began intensive religious social and national work in his See. At this time he began his vigorous campaign for nationhood for Cyprus. In 1950, he was elected both as Archbishop and Ethnarch - national leader of the Greek people of Cyprus.

It is a tribute to his qualities that he was elected as both the spiritual and political leader of his country. In 1952 he began his campaign at the United Nations General Assembly for international recognition of Cyprus.

During the following years of the decade he fought courageously to achieve his goal, enduring even exile from his country. Following the London Agreement in 1959 that Cyprus would become an independent Republic, he returned to Cyprus and was elected its first President.

President Makarios played a unique and distinguished role in his country's national and international affairs. He visited many countries in his quest for a solution to the problems of Cyprus. He tirelessly represented his country at many international conferences as well as at the U.N. and at meetings of Commonwealth Heads of Government.

His remarkable personal qualities earned him an eminent place amongst world statesmen. His counsels will be particularly missed at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings in which he had actively participated for many years.

I had the honour of meeting with him privately during the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London. At that time we discussed his forthcoming state visit to Australia in November this year. This visit would have been a fitting symbol of the development of longstanding and excellent relations between our two countries. The Australian Government greatly looked forward to it. I am sure that not only those Australians whose country of origin is Cyprus but all Australians will share my regret that it cannot take place.

We therefore wish to record our deep sympathy in the Parliament to the people of Cyprus. They have lost a statesman of great eminence who had long personified his people's quest for identity and independence.

We also hope that the search for a peaceful and lasting solution to problems in Cyprus, to which the late President had devoted so much of his life, will be pursued with determination despite his untimely death.

---