



PRIME MINISTER

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WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

The World Wildlife Fund is expected to extend its activities to Australia next year. An Australian World Wildlife Fund will be organised and run by Australians, and the funds raised will largely be spent on Australian projects.

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is an international body based in Switzerland whose objective is to help to conserve the world's natural heritage, especially threatened habitat and wildlife species.

It operates through national organisations which raise funds to assist nature conservation bodies, both private and governmental, with particular conservation projects.

The question of establishing a World Wildlife Fund in Australia was discussed in correspondence with the conservationist Sir Peter Scott, who was Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the World Wildlife Fund, and again at a meeting with Sir Peter Scott in London in June.

In September, the President of World Wildlife Fund International Mr. John Loudon, wrote giving his support for the proposal and offering full co-operation and assistance.

I had further discussions last week with Mr. Maurice Strong, one of WWF's International Trustees and former Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. Mr. Strong emphasised the importance which WWF attaches to establishing the organisation in Australia - the only continent on which it is presently not active. I emphasised to Mr. Strong my continuing personal interest in and support for the work of the WWF. He welcomed the proposal for Australian participation, as contributing to the important task of conserving Australia's unique wildlife.

Mr. Strong will attend a meeting of the WWF Executive in Switzerland next week, where it is expected that the proposal for an Australian organisation will be endorsed.

If the proposal goes ahead, consultations with Australian nature conservation bodies and with community leaders will take place during the next few months. This will be followed by a visit by senior WWF officials early next year to establish an appropriate basis for the Australian organisation, which is expected to be launched later in 1978.

WWF works closely with its sister organisation, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) of which Australia is a member. IUCN provides scientific and technical advice on conservation needs and priorities.

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