



PRIME MINISTER

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MEETING WITH WORLD WILDLIFE FUND OFFICIALS

Today I met with Mr. Charles de Haes, Director-General of World Wildlife Fund and Mr. David Ogilvy, a Trustee and Executive Council Member of World Wildlife Fund International.

I am delighted that World Wildlife Fund has responded so positively to the suggestion that it should establish a branch in Australia.

The possibility of such a move was discussed with Sir Peter Scott, the Chairman of World Wildlife Fund International, during my visit to London last year.

There is wide recognition of the need for World Wildlife Fund to begin operating here. This is because Australia has some of the world's most remarkable animals and plants, many of which are endangered, or confined to limited areas because of changes in land use.

It is now accepted that an essential ingredient in national and international action to save these species from becoming extinct is money -- for research, for management, and for the purchase of essential habitat.

World Wildlife Fund has a proven record as an internationally successful fund-raising organization for conservation action which relies on sound business principles in its operations.

World Wildlife Fund is not only concerned with fund-raising, however, but with ensuring that the money is spent effectively. It works largely by co-operation with other conservation organizations, often on a shared-cost basis.

I am advised that funds raised in Australia will be overwhelmingly spent on projects in Australia -- especially in the early years.

Contributions to the Australian branch of the fund will be made tax deductible.

There is an important role for Australian business in practical action to achieve wildlife conservation through support for World Wildlife Fund.

Environment and Conservation are so important that business cannot afford to ignore them.

After Mr. de Haes concludes his round of visits next week, he will again confer with Sir Noel Foley, Chairman designate of World Wildlife Fund Australia, when final decisions about the launching of the Fund in Australia will be taken.