



FILE

## PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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### DECLARATION OF KAKADU NATIONAL PARK

The Governor-General in Council has approved the proclamation of the Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory. This action puts into effect one of the most important elements of the Government's protective policy for the Alligator Rivers Region in the light of its decision in 1977 to permit the development of uranium mining.

The Government accepted recommendations of the Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry to grant Aboriginal land rights and establish a national park over the same area.

On 25 August 1977, in announcing the Government's decision, I said: "The Government has decided to accept the recommendation of the Ranger Inquiry that a major national park should be established in the Region to protect and preserve the natural features, the flora and fauna, the Aboriginal sacred sites and cave paintings".

The first stage of the park to be declared will be of over 6,000 sq. km.

I am informed that a combination of cultural richness, scientific interest and magnificent scenery will place Kakadu high among the great national parks of the world. Its scenery compares favourably with that in the famous national parks of Canada and the U.S.A.

Kakadu will represent a unique conjunction of conservation and Aboriginal interest. The Aboriginal owners have in effect made a gift of their land to the Australian people to be managed by the Commonwealth as a national park.

By agreement the Aboriginal owners and Northern Territory authorities will have an important role in the management.

I would expect that the widespread interest already being displayed in the proposed park will result in more tourists, including foreign tourists, visiting the area.

In order to adequately protect the features of the park, to provide in a meaningful way for Aboriginal participation in management and the decision-making process, and to cater for the projected increase in tourist interest, the Government is committed to a development program. Definition of the first five years of the program is already well advanced.