



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

14 October 1979

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF BLIND CITIZENS WHITE CANE SAFETY DAY

It gives me great pleasure to again join with the Australian Federation of Blind Citizens in recognising the 15th October as White Cane Safety Day.

There is a need for all of us to care more about the problems of the visually handicapped and to do all we can to help them. This day is in no sense related to any fund raising programme but rather is designed to heighten the Australian public's interest and awareness of the meaning of the use of the white cane.

The need for the motorist and fellow pedestrian to respond to the display of white cane is, of course, of great importance.

White Cane Safety Day gives all of us an opportunity to reflect on what we would experience in our everyday life if we were visually handicapped or blind. Not just the day-to-day difficulties of moving about, but of missing those sights which help to enrich our environment - changing landscapes, the smiling faces of our children and friends, flowers in bloom as well as the enjoyment of films and television.

Our awareness and acceptance of the visually handicapped should extend in a special way to children, in this the Year of the Child. We should all remember that they have a difficult road to tread while learning to cope with their disability. The knowledge, the very awareness of his or her acceptance by fellow citizens can only serve to brighten the handicapped child's outlook to the future.

I hope that White Cane Safety Day will be the focus for increasing public awareness of the needs of all blind and visually handicapped people in our community.