



# PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

TUESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 1980

## ITALIAN EARTHQUAKE

The Australian Government joins the Australian people in expressing our deepest sympathy at the tragic loss of life and destruction caused by the earthquake that occurred in the vicinity of Naples late in the evening of 23 November.

This is the second disaster of this nature to have struck Italy in the last four years.

Australians share the grief of those who have lost members of their families or friends as a result of the earthquake.

The Government and people of Italy can be assured of the support and sympathy of all Australians. The Australian Government has decided to relax migrant entry requirements so that relatives of Australian residents affected by the earthquake can be sponsored for migration as quickly as possible. The Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs will announce details later today.

In addition, the Government has begun discussions with Italian authorities as to the most suitable ways in which Australians can contribute emergency relief.

The Government has decided to allocate immediately the sum of \$500,000 to the Australian appeal which is being established by leaders of the Italian Community in Australia. I have agreed to be Patron of that appeal.

The Government has agreed that any donation to the appeal could be treated as deductible for taxation purposes. The Commonwealth would also agree to match dollar for dollar funds contributed by the States. The specific purpose for which the money will be used will be decided in consultation between the Italian and Australian Governments and the organisers of the Australian appeal.

The resources of the Australian Government in Australia and in Italy are of course available for any members of the community who wish to obtain information and assistance in relation to this disaster.

The Telephone Interpreter Service will provide information in Italian to callers and the Department of Foreign Affairs has established two special lines to receive inquiries (613305 and 613474).