



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

SATURDAY, 28 FEBRUARY, 1981

JOINT AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND RELIEF OPERATION FOR STRANDED QANTAS PASSENGERS

The Prime Minister tonight announced that a joint Australia-New Zealand relief operation for stranded Qantas passengers would begin as soon as possible.

Mr. Fraser said Australia and New Zealand Air Force Hercules C130 aircraft will be used to ferry passengers each way across the Tasman.

The Prime Minister said the New Zealand Prime Minister had agreed to his proposed rescue operation which would continue as long as necessary to remove the backlog of stranded passengers.

Mr. Fraser said he was delighted by Mr. Muldoon's response especially as the plan to move up to 6,000 people would be a combined effort.

He added that the operation would be conducted by the two Air Forces using their aircraft to and from Air Force bases.

Further details of the relief operation would be made available by transport authorities.

Mr. Fraser said the rescue operation was to help Australian and New Zealand travellers facing increasing difficulties and hardship.

It was a rescue operation by the two Governments.