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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

WEDNESDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 1982

COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANCE FOR FLOODS IN THE SOUTH-WEST REGION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

I have written to the Premier of Western Australia concerning the extensive flooding which has taken place in the South-West of the State. The Commonwealth has agreed that a number of relief measures proposed by the Premier would be eligible for Commonwealth assistance under the natural disaster relief arrangements.

These measures have been estimated to cost a total of \$3.5 million and include:

- . grants for relief of personal hardship and distress
- . grants for restoration of public assets to pre-disaster standard and emergency protection and repair work by State, local and semi-government authorities
- . concessional loans to primary producers in working occupation of their properties for purchase of feed, restocking and restoration purposes, and
- . freight subsidies for the transport of fodder, stock to and from agistment, and fence posts.

The subsidy on the transport of fence posts is an additional measure to those provided under the arrangements, and the Commonwealth has agreed to its inclusion for this disaster only in recognition of the severity of the floods.

Under the natural disaster relief arrangements the Commonwealth provides \$3 for \$1 of State expenditure on approved relief measures above the State's base figure for expenditure on all major natural disasters in a financial year.

I have noted the work of State emergency services in acting to contain the damage in what was a major flood situation. It is particularly noteworthy that there has been no loss of life in this emergency.