

MEDIA RELEASE

DEATH OF MR BREZHNEV

Statement by the Acting Prime Minister
the Rt Hon. J.D. Anthony, C.H., M.P.

I have been informed today of the death of President Brezhnev of the Soviet Union, and on behalf of the Australian Government, I extend my condolences to the Government of the Soviet Union and the late President's family.

As leader of the Soviet Union in the past 18 years, President Brezhnev has faced awesome responsibilities both to his own people and to all mankind. His period in power, on its own, is a remarkable achievement in today's world. In this time he has sought to improve the living conditions of the Soviet people. He has also sought to promote the notion of detente in international co-operation.

It has to be said, however, that under President Brezhnev, the Soviet Union's military strength and the projection of Soviet power has reached unprecedented levels, and in recent times, has given rise to serious tensions and uncertainty. Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan and, more recently, the tragedy of Poland, are testimony to the policies for which President Brezhnev and his associates will be remembered.

The Australian Government sincerely hopes that for the good of all people, the new leaders in Moscow will sincerely follow the path of peace which the late President Brezhnev frequently claimed as his country's policy. There will be enormous benefit to all mankind if this can come about.

CANBERRA

11 November 1982.