

9

FIRST AUSTRALIAN IN SPACE

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

Australia has accepted an United States Government offer of a place for an Australian on the Space Shuttle.

The first Australian in space is scheduled to be on board the Space Shuttle which launches Australia's domestic communications satellite in the second half of 1985.

Two Australians will be selected for special training by the U.S. National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA). They will be payload experts, with one to be a crew member, and the second a back-up.

The Department of Science and Technology will be responsible for the selection of the astronauts and other arrangements, in association with AUSSAT, the company which owns and manages the satellite system.

Australia is one of the first countries to receive such an invitation, and it is a tribute to the high standards which Australia has maintained in past co-operation with the U.S. space program.

Australia will now be involved at the forefront of space research and development, and this will provide an important stimulus for the further development of high technology industry.

It is particularly appropriate that Australians will be directly involved with the launching of the Australian satellite, and it is further evidence of the technological advances that flow from the government's decision to proceed with the Australian satellite system.

For further information contact: Mr. E.R. Hunter,
Director of Public Relations
Department of Science and Technology
(062) 644 145
(062) 513 657 A.H.

Canberra,
17 December, 1982