



PRIME MINISTER

EMBARGOED UNTIL 10 A.M.
10 June 1983

FOR MEDIA

The following message was read on the Prime Minister's behalf by the Minister for Home Affairs and Environment, Mr. Cohen, at the official opening of the National Conservation Strategy for Australia Conference today:

I regret that due to commitments overseas, I will not be able either to address you personally or to open this most important Conference to discuss a National Conservation Strategy for Australia.

You meet together as a group of Australians drawn from differing situations and backgrounds, representing a diversity of organisations and with differing outlooks and interests. Your collective purpose is to discuss, debate and hopefully agree upon a set of Strategic principles which will promote the conservation and sustainable development and use of the nation's living resources. This most important undertaking should form part of our overall objectives for the future of our country. You will already know of the Government's commitment to achieving sustainable economic growth, full employment and high quality environment. These objectives are not, as some may suggest, totally in conflict without hope of reconciliation. In fact, the World Conservation Strategy points out that to achieve our goals of social and economic development we need competent environmental management.

In the course of this Conference, you will be asked to consider and balance some very complex questions involving Australia's living resources. Each of you will rightly seek to put your views in a strong and forthright manner. This I encourage, but above all, I ask you to keep firmly before you the principle of consensus building and the responsibility we all have to develop this nation for the benefit of its own people and with due regard for its place in the community of nations.

The recent Economic Summit meeting achieved a high degree of unanimity because its participants brought to that meeting an awareness of difficult economic circumstances and arrived at agreement on the fact of the matter. They had a willingness to work together to achieve agreed objectives. The challenge to you all as delegates to this Conference is similarly to face realistically the difficulties posed by living and working within Australia's unique environmental conditions and to produce a Strategy that will ensure sustainable development of our living resources.

Be assured that your considerations will be taken seriously by the Federal Government. The Minister will be elaborating on our current policies and will provide an indication of initiatives the Government is considering in regard to the implementation of the National Conservation Strategy for Australia.

I wish you well in your endeavours in the full expectation that you will provide to the community and Government in Australia a Strategy for the sensible and sustainable use of living resources in Australia for the future.