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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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The Government welcomes the agreement that has been reached by the British and Chinese Governments about the future of Hong Kong.

I congratulate both Governments on having achieved this settlement.

It is noteworthy that more than two years of intensive negotiations have resulted in a detailed agreement being reached with the declared object of maintaining confidence in Hong Kong and of ensuring its continued stability and prosperity.

It has been my firmly and consistently held view, a view strengthened by my visit to Hong Kong and particularly by my discussions with Premier Zhao in Peking in February this year, that the discussions between the United Kingdom and China would result in an amicable and sensible agreement which would allow Hong Kong to continue to function in conditions acceptable to all the parties.

Australia has important interests in Hong Kong and in Hong Kong's continuing to play a positive role in the development of our region. The agreement that has now been reached, and the arrangements made for continuing co-operation between the parties involved in Hong Kong's future, will make an important contribution to the political stability of the Western Pacific region as a whole.