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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

23 OCTOBER 1984

LAUNCESTON GENERAL HOSPITAL

In accordance with a long-standing-Labor Party commitment, the Federal Government will meet half the capital cost of the final stage of development of Launceston General Hospital. The final stage is estimated to cost up to \$34 million, and the Federal Government's contribution has an upper limit of \$17 million.

The completion of development of the hospital will overcome severe difficulties caused by the current separation of services and facilities on opposite sides of Charles Street. It will enable the hospital to function at full efficiency, with greater comfort and convenience for patients and staff. It will also guarantee that people in the north of Tasmania will have ample access to high quality hospital facilities for many years to come.

Renovation work on the Queen Victoria Hospital will also be included in the project.

To ensure that Launceston hospital is completed as quickly as possible, I have proposed to the Tasmanian Premier that feasibility planning be completed by mid 1985, the design for construction tender finalised early in 1986, and construction commenced in mid 1986. This should enable completion of the hospital by the end of 1989.

The Federal Government's decision follows consideration of the recommendations of the joint Commonwealth-State Committee of Review chaired by Sir Keith Shann, which reported earlier this year.

The Commonwealth Departments of Health and Housing and Construction will be members of a joint Commonwealth-State Steering Committee which will oversight all stages of the development of the project and will participate in the selection of the consultants to undertake the initial feasibility study.