



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

13 February 1985

The Federal Government's substantial package of offers to the New South Wales medical profession to end the long-running doctors' dispute will remain open.

If the leaders of the dispute advise their members to return to work, the Federal and New South Wales Governments will immediately undertake direct negotiations on the details and implementation of the offer.

The Government has sought to meet all the reasonable concerns of the profession with constructive and specific undertakings, conditional only upon the Australian Medical Association advising doctors to resume normal duties.

Both Governments have undertaken exhaustive and objective discussions with the medical profession in order to settle the dispute.

All we have asked in return is that they recommend a return to work and get back to the sadly neglected business of caring for their patients.

Those specific undertakings and commitments made by myself and the New South Wales Premier remain open.

I strongly urge the medical profession to accept the offer, return to normal duties, and allow the Government peace offer to be implemented. There cannot be any implementation of the Government offers and there cannot be any negotiations on the finer details of proposals until there has been a call for a return to work.

If the doctors decide to go through with their resignations and desert their patients, then they must expect the Government to take decisive action to maintain public hospitals for the people of New South Wales.

Neither the Federal nor New South Wales Governments can tolerate for much longer the current situation of the NSW doctors holding the public to ransom.

I hope that good sense will prevail and the doctors will realise that only through a negotiated settlement can we serve the best interests of everyone concerned - and most importantly the patients.

If the resigned doctors do walk out of the public hospital system, then my Government stands ready to support the New South Wales Government to ensure the maintenance of those hospital services.