



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE CHIEF MINISTER
OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, MR HATTON

The Prime Minister and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Mr Hatton, today announced that a project to research and publish an Aboriginal Pharmacopoeia had been granted funding under the joint Commonwealth-State Bicentennial Commemorative Program.

The Pharmacopoeia project involves the evaluation and documentation of Aboriginal traditional medicines and an assessment of their use in modern health care. The project will make a major contribution to modern health care programs run by Aboriginal Health Workers and to the wider Australian community.

The Aboriginal community will be actively involved throughout the project. They will act as editorial advisers and artists, and Aboriginal holders of traditional herbal knowledge will participate in the gathering of information.

Mr Hawke said that the Commonwealth was pleased to be associated with this distinctive and imaginative project.

"The publication of an Aboriginal Pharmacopoeia captures the essence of the Bicentenary. The project entwines the threads of the past and the present. Traditional knowledge, born from the Aboriginals' long and intimate relationship with the earth, will be complemented by modern scientific methods and enquiry. The project is an exciting example of the theme of the Bicentenary, 'Living Together'."

Mr Hatton said that the project would help safeguard knowledge of traditional herbal lore and contribute to modern health care.

The Aboriginal Pharmacopoeia project will cost a total of \$446,000, half of which will be contributed by each Government. Other projects in a joint program valued at some \$5 million in current prices are currently being developed by the Northern Territory Government in consultation with the Commonwealth Government and are expected to be announced progressively over the next 12 months.