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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

25 SEPTEMBER 1986

I am pleased to announce that the Prime Minister of India, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, has accepted an invitation to visit Australia from 14 to 16 October as a guest of the Government.

I welcome Mr Gandhi's visit and, in particular, look forward to discussing with him international political and economic issues of mutual concern, including the very important issue of the situation in southern Africa on which we have worked closely together in the Commonwealth context.

Australia and India share many common values and traditional connections, especially as members of the Commonwealth and as littoral states of the Indian Ocean, and I look forward to our two countries working together more closely in the future in the region. India plays an important role in international affairs, and is a major force in maintaining the stability of the Asian region. As the world's largest democracy, it is influential in promoting the ideals shared by all societies committed to the pursuit of freedom and peace. Mr Gandhi's visit will reinforce the friendly relations between our two countries and also help to give more substance to the bilateral relationship, including in the economic area.

In Canberra, Mr Gandhi will hold official discussions with myself and senior Cabinet Ministers, meet the Governor-General, and address the National Press Club.

He will also visit Sydney where he will be talking to senior Australian business and trade union representatives under the auspices of EPAC, and meet with the New South Wales Government, and the Indian community.