



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

16 DECEMBER 1987

Senator Susan Ryan, the Special Minister of State, has today informed me of her intention to retire from politics.

I greatly regret that I and the Cabinet will be losing Susan Ryan's talents. She has brought special perspectives to all her tasks from her wide range of interests and particularly her long standing concern with women's issues and education. She has been a most valued colleague and an effective and articulate Minister both in the Education portfolio, and latterly, as Special Minister of State.

Senator Ryan was Education Minister at a time of rapid change and fundamental reform, in particular the fundamental restructuring of Commonwealth support arrangements for Australian schools, and the ending the divisive State aid debate.

Before entering politics, and in Opposition, Senator Ryan prepared the way for governments to have a special focus on women's issues and, since the 1983 election, Susan Ryan has held the position of Minister assisting me on the Status of Women. Her advocacy has led to the many achievements in this area of which the Government is justly proud - such as the Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Employment Opportunity and the Affirmative Action legislation.

Since the election I have also appreciated her support as she assisted me with specific responsibilities for the Bicentenary as well as in other matters in my portfolio and in that of the Minister for Community Services and Health. I am grateful that she will be carrying out her special Bicentennial tasks through January 1988.

The ACT, too, is losing a most able and energetic representative. Susan Ryan was elected as a foundation Senator for the ACT in 1975. She quickly established her credentials within the Caucus and became a member of the Shadow Cabinet from 1977, working on and shaping a range of policies.

Senator Ryan's contribution to this Government and to the Australian Labor Party has been very substantial and she has brought considerable skills and abilities to the various areas with which she has been associated. She will be missed by me and all my colleagues. I wish her every success in her new position as Publishing Editor for Penguin Australia, to which I am certain she will bring the same distinction which she contributed to my Government.

Senator Ryan's retirement from politics will take place sometime before the resumption of the Parliament in the Autumn sittings.