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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 6.00 AM
SATURDAY 6 AUGUST 1988**

I have heard with sadness of the death of Sir Keith Shann.

Sir Keith was an outstanding Australian public servant who had a distinguished career spanning almost 40 years. He made important contributions as a diplomat in Asia and at the United Nations and in Canberra as a senior officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs and as Chairman of the Public Service Board.

Sir Keith established a world-wide reputation for diplomacy when he was appointed Australian representative and Rapporteur of the United Nations Committee on the Problem of Hungary in 1957. The role he played in bringing the international community to address the consequences of the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 reflected great credit on his personal skills and on Australia.

Sir Keith was an important member of a generation of Australian diplomats who worked vigorously to define distinctly Australian interests in the international environment, particularly in Asia. He was Ambassador to the Philippines (1956-1958) and to Japan (1974-1977). Many, however, will remember him particularly for the singular contribution to public life he made as Ambassador to Indonesia in 1962-66.

I met Sir Keith on a number of occasions at overseas posts and can personally attest to his outstanding capacities and the distinction with which he represented Australia.

I extend the Government's and my personal condolences to Lady Shann and her family on this sad loss.