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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

7 SEPTEMBER 1990

Prime Minister's Message for International Literacy Day,
8 September 1990

On the occasion of International Literacy Day in International Literacy Year I call on the nation to work together for literacy development. Our future depends on becoming a clever country. No educational skill is more fundamental than literacy. Literacy development needs to occur throughout a person's lifetime. We all have more complex reading and writing demands placed on us as society becomes more technologically advanced.

The school system in Australia is one of the best in the world and we will continue to improve it. Most of us develop enough of a literacy base during childhood to learn the extra skills we need as adults. However, some of us experience difficulties during childhood and need to have another chance when we become independent adults. Some of us do not come from an English-speaking background and need to develop literacy skills in English.

We all have a part to play in literacy development. Responsibility lies not only with the education sector but also with parents, community groups and industry. Australia will also play its part in assisting with literacy development in those regions of the world faced with greater difficulties than our own.