



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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Australia is again proud to join other Commonwealth countries in celebrating Commonwealth Day 1991. The variety of the Commonwealth's achievements reflects the rich diversity of its members as well as their common commitment to creating a fair, peaceful and sustainably productive world for all.

The Commonwealth's achievements in southern Africa deserve special mention this year, as we see reforms taking place in South Africa. The Commonwealth can take pride in the role it has played. It has been at the forefront of international calls to end apartheid, and played a catalytic role in the decision of the international community to impose measures on South Africa.

The Commonwealth has recently decided on ways to give practical encouragement to the reform process in South Africa. At this encouraging stage, we look forward with hope to the maintenance of the momentum of reform in South Africa.

Through the Commonwealth, Australia is pursuing its global commitment to the environment. Many Commonwealth member nations are environmentally fragile, and some are particularly susceptible to climate change. Australia's response - to provide training on the effects of climate change for Commonwealth member nations - has been well received. The first phase of the program has been successfully completed, and confirms that it will provide real and practical benefits for the people of the Commonwealth.

Since the last Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in 1989, the Commonwealth has been engaged in a rigorous review of its roles and functions. The priorities identified during the review will be considered at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting at Harare in October. This process will ensure that the Commonwealth continues to meet the needs of its members, as it has done over the past forty years. I am confident that the Commonwealth will be able to face the challenges of the 1990s and beyond.