



**PRIME MINISTER**

FOR MEDIA

27 AUGUST 1991

The Government has decided today to establish full diplomatic relations with the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Australia is proud to be among the first nations to take this step.

This fulfils the long-held dream of the many Baltic people who have made their homes in Australia, and who have made such a magnificent contribution to our national life in many fields.

Australia did not recognise the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union in 1940, but we had until today accepted the reality of Soviet de facto control over their affairs.

Now, with the events of the past week, the Baltic States have regained effective control over their own affairs for the first time since 1940. In our judgment, each of the Baltic States has now established sufficient control over its own defined territory, and is sufficiently well placed to enter into diplomatic relations with other States, to satisfy the internationally accepted criteria for independent statehood.

We look forward to building closer relations and stronger cooperation with the Baltic States. The Australian Government will seek to accredit our Ambassador in Copenhagen to Lithuania and Latvia, and our Ambassador in Stockholm to Estonia. We will move immediately to discuss the necessary practical arrangements with the Baltic Governments.