



## PRIME MINISTER

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING MP

### AUSTRALIAN SUPPORT FOR SOUTH PACIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

During the South Pacific Forum meeting, I reaffirmed Australia's support for programs aimed at protecting the environment of the South Pacific. I announced a number of new measures which will serve to strengthen our existing environmental activities.

Australia is already funding a \$6.7 million Sea Level and Climate Monitoring Project in the Pacific. In order to increase our support for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, I announced that Australia will provide a further \$1.3 million for new programs which will enhance the capacity of the region to monitor climate change. The new funding will be used to help upgrade meteorological equipment, train climate-monitoring personnel and provide specialist back-up services.

Recognising that South Pacific island biological diversity is among the most threatened in the world, Australia will provide \$5 million for a biodiversity conservation and management project in the South Pacific as part of Australia's \$30 million commitment to the Global Environment Facility of the World Bank. The project will be part of Australia's support of the effective implementation of the Biodiversity Convention.

Both the sea level and biodiversity projects will be developed in close consultation with island countries and the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP).

I also underlined the importance that Australia attaches to maintaining a balance between development and environmental protection. Other environmental areas where Australia is providing support include tropical forest conservation, waste management and an environment program on Radio Australia.

Australia continues to be a strong supporter of SPREP. Under its auspices, Australia helped Pacific islands prepare for, and attend, the UNCED meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

I also hope the South Pacific will play a leading role in one of the key areas of follow-up to UNCED, the conference on sustainable development for small island developing states. In recognition of the special environmental needs of small, vulnerable states, Australia would be prepared to contribute towards the costs of holding the conference in the South Pacific.

Honiara  
8 July 1992