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PRIME MINISTER

141/92

**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP
CHRISTMAS APPEALS AND ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR EMERGENCY
RELIEF**

I announced on 6 December 1992 that the Government will match dollar for dollar cash donations by the Australian public to major voluntary agencies for their Christmas appeals.

I am pleased to announce today that the Government will also provide an additional \$2 million for the Emergency Relief Program. This money is in addition to the \$7.6 million provided for Emergency Relief in December.

The Emergency Relief Program makes it possible for some 700 community welfare agencies with around 1,000 outlets across Australia to provide assistance to people in need.

The additional funding will ensure that smaller agencies which currently provide emergency relief to individuals and families are able to offer extra assistance in the Christmas period.

Many of these smaller agencies focus on special needs groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, or are able to deliver assistance to rural and remote areas.

Only those organisations which do not receive matching Christmas appeal funds will be eligible for the additional Emergency Relief Funding.

Eligibility criteria have also been determined for the Christmas appeals matching funds.

Eligible organisations which benefit from the matching funds will be national organisations or major players in a State/Territory with an extensive coverage in the areas of Christmas need. Organisations must have a sound record in material aid and Christmas assistance so that the funds can be distributed as quickly as possible. Organisations must be incorporated with Taxation Exemption Status (Public Benevolent Institution) and must also have had a Christmas appeal in operation at the time of the initial announcement on 6 December 1992.

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My objective in establishing these matching arrangements was to encourage those of us who are better off in the community to reach out to our fellow Australians who are less well off so that they can celebrate Christmas in the way that many of us take for granted.

I hope that the Australian community will follow the Government's lead and increase donations to the voluntary agencies so that all Australians can enjoy their Christmas this year.

Further information on the guidelines and application details for Christmas appeals matching funds can be obtained from the Department of Health, Housing and Community Services - telephone (06) 289 5700; fax (06) 289 1076 or the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - telephone (06) 271 5278; fax (06) 271 5107.

Canberra
11 December 1992