



PRIME MINISTER

**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP
DEATH OF SIR ROBERT REX OF NIUE**

I have today sent the following message of condolence to the Acting Premier of Niue, the Hon Young Vivian, following the death on 11 December of Sir Robert Rex, Premier of Niue since self government in 1974:

I was saddened to learn of the death on 11 December of Sir Robert Rex. Please pass on my sincere personal condolences, and those of the Australian Government and people, to Lady Rex and her family and to the Government and people of Niue on this unhappy occasion.

With Sir Robert's passing, not only has Niue lost one of its founding fathers but the South Pacific region as a whole has lost one of its elder statesmen and most eminent leaders. He was an active participant in the South Pacific Forum from its inception in 1971.

I was privileged to meet Sir Robert during his official visit to Australia in January this year and again at the South Pacific Forum in July in Honiara. Sir Robert's father was an Australian and I was particularly struck by his undoubted pride in his Australian connection. I was also very impressed by his wise and constructive perspective on regional affairs. Australia has lost a special friend.

Australia will be represented at Sir Robert's funeral on 14 December by the High Commissioner to New Zealand, Mr Rob Laurie.

CANBERRA

13 December 1992