



**PRIME MINISTER**

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**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA, THE HON PAUL KEATING, FOR THE IXth INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AIDS BERLIN 7-11 JUNE 1993**

The global AIDS epidemic recognises neither borders nor political ideologies; it respects no nationality, race or creed – yet it has the potential to touch the lives of every person in the world.

The size of the HIV pandemic is already staggering with global predictions indicating that as many as 30 to 40 million men, women, and children will be infected by the year 2000 with 12 to 18 million living with AIDS.

In the face of this alarming prospect, events such as this, the IXth International Conference on AIDS, are crucial to the continuation and efficacy of the world-wide effort to minimise the impact of HIV and AIDS. Through the exchange of our experience and wisdom we are better equipped to meet the challenges posed by this disease.

In Australia a decade has passed since the first case of AIDS was diagnosed. Those ten years have been a time of challenge and commitment as Australian governments, community based organisations, scientists, health professionals and individuals have developed a strong partnership responding to the HIV pandemic.

Australia was one of the first countries in the world to develop a nationally co-ordinated response to HIV and to embody this in an agreed National HIV/AIDS Strategy.

This national strategy embraces the range of medical, scientific, social, legal, education, political and most importantly human responses that are inextricably linked with HIV and AIDS.

We are confident that Australia's approach is one of which we can be justly proud. Our presence here is evidence of our firm commitment to support and co-operate with other countries so that together we can continue to strengthen our efforts to combat this pandemic.

My thoughts and best wishes are with you during this conference.

CANBERRA, 9 JUNE 1993