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PRIME MINISTER

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

AUDIENCE WITH THE QUEEN

I was received in audience by Her Majesty the Queen at Balmoral Castle on 18 September.

There is a longstanding convention that the content of these conversations remain confidential. But I am able to say I explained to Her Majesty that, notwithstanding the deep respect and warm affection felt towards her by the Australian people, there was a growing feeling that Australia should make the necessary constitutional changes to allow the appointment of an Australian Head of State. I said such a move was seen as necessary to establish clearly Australia's identity as an independent nation. I outlined to Her Majesty the various steps that would be involved in such a process, including the need for a referendum to approve constitutional amendments. The Australian Government's view was that, if approved by the Australian people at a referendum, it would be appropriate for Australia to become a republic by the centenary of Federation in 2001. I told Her Majesty that, in such a situation, Australia would remain a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, and that the Australian people would warmly welcome visits to Australia by Her Majesty as Head of the Commonwealth and as the Queen of the United Kingdom.

Her Majesty authorised me to say that she would, of course, act on the advice of her Australian Ministers, as she always has, and on any decision made by the Australian people.

LEUCHARS, SCOTLAND
19 September 1993