

**PRIME MINISTER**18  
149/93**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP**

The Australian Government welcomes the Joint Declaration on Ireland issued by the British Prime Minister, Mr Major, and the Irish Taoiseach, Mr Reynolds, on 15 December.

The Government believes that the Declaration offers all parties in Ireland a new opportunity to establish a solid basis for understanding and trust within the Island and with the United Kingdom. Peace in Ireland can only be built on such understanding and trust.

The Government hopes that all parties will now work for a renunciation of violence and for peaceful reconciliation.

Australia's support for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland has been shown in the past by Sir Ninian Stephen's chairmanship of the political talks on Northern Ireland.

We continue to be ready to offer what support we usefully can to the process.

**CANBERRA****December 16, 1993**