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# PRIME MINISTER

39/94

## **STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP**

### **AUSTRALIA FESTIVAL AT THE KENNEDY CENTER, WASHINGTON, DC**

I welcome the announcement today by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington that it intends to hold an Australia Festival between October 9 and 16 this year.

The week-long festival, featuring many of our best known performance artists, will promote Australia as a vibrant, creative society with a rich and unique cultural life.

This can only enhance our image in the US, and help us understand each other better.

The Kennedy Center's five theatres will showcase a wide cross-section of Australian talent including the Australian Ballet, Tjapukai Dance Theatre, Circus Oz and The Chamber Made Opera. Australian films will also be on display.

The benefits flowing to Australia from the festival will be of great value. By giving Americans a glimpse of an Australia they seldom see, it will promote tourism, cultural trade and the exchange of creative ideas.

I am particularly pleased that Aboriginal Australians will play such a key part in the schedule of performance. The Tjapukai Dance Theatre and the popular band Yothu Yindi will awaken Americans to the diversity of modern Australia and its remarkable indigenous influences.

The Australian Government will provide sponsorship for the Festival, with details in next week's Federal Budget.

**CANBERRA  
3 MAY 1994**