



PRIME MINISTER

62/94.

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON PJ KEATING MP AUSTRALIA-PACIFIC 2000 PROGRAM

I am pleased to announce today the establishment of an Australia-Pacific 2000 Program under which Australia will help Forum Island countries participate in the Sydney 2000 Olympics.

The Games will be a significant event for the region and \$1 million a year will be spent on programs aimed at maximising opportunities for South Pacific nations to be involved and their athletes to participate in the Olympics and to benefit from them.

The program will involve assistance for sporting and cultural visit/exchanges and youth activities.

It will include an Oceania Sports Assistance Program to be administered by the Australian Sports Commission. This program will assist a range of sports development activities within the countries of the region in the lead-up to the Games.

The Commission program will enable elite athletes in the region to develop to their full potential and so achieve maximum participation at the 2000 Olympics.

Forum Island countries strongly supported Sydney's bid for the 2000 Games - an important element of which was a commitment on Australia's part to extend the benefits of the Olympics to our region, and to highlight the unique cultural heritage of the region.

The program fulfils this commitment.

Island countries also stand to gain significantly from the expected tourism boom generated by the Games. Forum leaders in their statement yesterday recognised the excellent potential for tourism development in the South Pacific.

**BRISBANE
2 AUGUST 1994**