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PRIME MINISTER

38/95

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

VISIT TO JAPAN

I am pleased to announce that I will make my first official visit to Japan from 24 to 28 May. I will meet their Majesties, the Emperor and Empress, and renew my productive working relationship with Prime Minister Murayama and other senior members of the Japanese Government. I will also have discussions with key Japanese business leaders.

This important anniversary year of the end of World War II provides an opportunity to reflect on the unique partnership we have forged together over the past fifty years and where we might take it in the 21st century.

Japan is by far our largest trading partner as well as a major source of technology and investment. In 1994 two-way trade between us was worth \$28 billion. Through years of human contact at all levels, our two countries have developed a genuine spirit of friendship. Our relationship has become a significant - and positive - force in regional and global affairs.

With Prime Minister Murayama I will be discussing ways of ensuring the relationship between Australia and Japan maintains its vitality. We will also discuss our important common interests in the region, particularly APEC which Japan chairs this year. Both our governments are strongly committed to a substantive outcome at the Osaka Leaders' meeting in November.

During my visit I will open an Australian Business Centre, bringing representative and tourist offices of the Australian states together with Austrade into one commercial hub.

In the spirit of the *Australia Remembers* commemorative year, I will attend a special ceremony at Hodogaya Cemetery and pay tribute to those Australian and other Commonwealth servicemen and women who are buried there.

CANBERRA
28 April 1995