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## PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

21 February 1985

### JOINT STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER AND PREMIER OF NEW SOUTH WALES

The Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, and the New South Wales Premier, Mr Wran, today welcomed the call by the Federal Executive of the Australian Medical Association for doctors in New South Wales public hospitals to resume normal duties.

The call came following the agreement reached in negotiations involving the Prime Minister, the Federal Health Minister, Dr Blewett, and New South Wales Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, Mr Mulock in Canberra today.

The Prime Minister and Premier said the agreement formed the basis for settlement of the long-running dispute.

"We urge NSW surgeons to respond positively to the responsible and reasonable recommendation made by Mr Thompson," they said.

"We have always believed that the good sense of the majority of the profession would prevail over the political objectives of extremist groups."

"The AMA's statement today reflects the belief of most doctors that the well-being of their patients is of paramount importance."

"Following this call for a return to work we are confident that immediate negotiations between both Governments and the AMA can address the legitimate concerns of the profession."

"Through these negotiations the previous high standard of patient care can be restored in New South Wales public hospitals. We are determined that every Australian's right of health cover through the fair and universal Medicare program will be maintained."

As a result of discussions today with the AMA the following agreement has been reached between the parties:

- (a) The AMA accepts the Prime Minister's and Premier's offer of 23 January (as amended by not insisting on withdrawal of resignations);

- (b) The AMA agrees to an extensive advertising and communication program calling upon doctors to resume normal duties;
- (c) The Governments agree to begin negotiations with the AMA next Tuesday with a preliminary meeting between officers on Saturday to determine procedures and timetable;
- (d) The Governments agree to defer the advertising of specific vacancies pending an assessment to be made next week of the extent to which doctors make themselves available for normal duties; if there are gaps remaining in the provision of medical services in public hospitals then specific positions will be advertised.