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YOUR TELNOS 1222 TO WASHINGTON AND GUIDANCE 47 AND 48: NORTHERN  
IRELAND: JOINT DECLARATION

SUMMARY

1. Australians welcome Joint Declaration. Mr Keating issues helpful statement: Australia remains ready to offer what useful support it can to the peace process. Need for early message to Sir Ninian Stephen to explain where he now stands.

DETAIL

2. We have briefed officials in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) and DFAT, and have sent copies of Guidance TURs to the Irish Ambassador and to Sir Ninian Stephen. The Irish Ambassador has also been in touch with the same DPMC officials on instructions to urge a statement from Mr Keating welcoming and endorsing the Joint Declaration. Thawley (AUS equivalent in DPMC) telephoned to check if we saw problems with Mr Keating issuing such a statement today. I said that I was sure we would warmly welcome that.

3. The full text of Mr Keating's statement is as follows:

BEGINS

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.