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PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

24 DEC 1979

Margaret
My dear Prime Minister,

It is with great pleasure that I am writing to congratulate you on the considerable triumph for British foreign policy you have just achieved in reaching an all party settlement at the Lancaster House Conference. The problem of Rhodesia was one which affected each and every country of the Commonwealth in some degree. Indeed, as we were all so painfully aware before the Lusaka meeting, it carried risks for the future of the Commonwealth itself. Australia, like every other Commonwealth member and indeed other members of the world community, is grateful to Britain for what it has been able to do so successfully under most difficult circumstances.

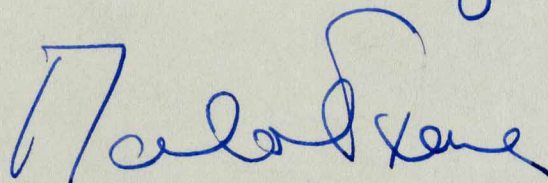
Your success at the Conference owes much to the determination and diplomatic skill exhibited by Peter Carrington throughout the last fourteen weeks. There were times when patience must have been strained, but in retrospect I consider it remarkable not that the talks went on so long, but that you managed to bring together onto common ground parties who in such recent memory were so far apart.

The process of bringing Rhodesia to independence as the new nation of Zimbabwe is by no means over. Australia has already made commitments to assist in the implementation of the Lancaster House settlement. We will continue to do what we can to help reach the final goal. Our two Governments will of course remain in close touch in regard to developments in Rhodesia. This will be facilitated by our establishment of a Liaison Office in Salisbury.

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Allow me to say in conclusion that what has been achieved so far promises to have an enormous impact on the troubled region of southern Africa. Your Government is actively involved in working for other peaceful solutions to other problems that beset that region. You may count on my Government to do all it can to support you in these tasks.

My warmest personal regards



(Malcolm Fraser)

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
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