

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON.
HAROLD HOLT, IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

14TH MARCH, 1967

REFEREN DUM

Both Houses of Parliament have now approved the bills containing the proposed laws to alter the Constitution. The bills were the Constitution Alteration (Parliament) Bill and the Constitution Alteration (Aboriginals) Bill.

Under the provisions of the Constitution, a proposed law for an alteration of the Constitution must be submitted to the electors not less than two months, nor more than six months, after the proposals have been passed by both Houses.

Before the proposals can be submitted to the electors, it will be necessary to distribute copies of the arguments for and against. To this end, the Referendum (Constitution Alteration) Act provides that if, within four weeks of the passage of the proposed laws by both Houses, the arguments in favour of and against the proposed laws are forwarded to the Chief Electoral Officer, he is to print them and post a copy to each elector. The Government is presently arranging for the "Yes" case to be prepared and submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer in the normal way on behalf of those who voted for the proposals, and no doubt those who voted against the nexus proposal will be preparing the case against its adoption.

I am glad to say that no vote was cast against the proposals relating to aborigines.

In all the circumstances, the Government has decided that the Referendum should be held on 27th May, 1967. The Government will recommend to the Governor-General that the writ for the Referendum be issued on 28th April so that, in accordance with the Referendum (Constitution Alteration) Act, the Chief Electoral Officer may then proceed to distribute the pamphlet containing the "Yes" and "No" cases to electors in time for the Referendum.
