



**PRIME MINISTER**

Press Statement No. 78

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ACTION ON PRICES

The Australian Government today decided to seek urgently proposals for the stabilisation of domestic prices of meat.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, said today that Cabinet had decided that the Minister for Primary Industry, Senator Wriedt, should seek the proposals from the Australian Meat Board.

The board will be asked to submit a plan for the stabilisation of domestic meat prices for consideration by the Government before the Premiers' Conference on Prices and Incomes Policy.

The Premiers' Conference will be held in Canberra on 10 May.

This was one of several decisions on prices reached by Cabinet today.

Cabinet authorised the urgent preparation of legislation to establish a prices justification body.

The Treasurer, Mr. Crean, will draft the legislation in consultation with the Attorney-General, Senator Murphy, in time for its introduction and passage during the present Parliamentary sittings.

Cabinet decided that in the development of the legislation the following points should be taken into account:

- . The approach should be directed towards prices justification rather than price control;
- . The name of the new body should be the Prices Justification Board;

- . The board should be an independent body responsible to the Prime Minister; and
- . The board should not be limited to considering only matters referred to it but should be given authority to initiate investigations on its own account where significant price increases are noted.

In other decisions on prices, Cabinet decided that the Economic Committee of Cabinet will be responsible for developing for the Cabinet the Government's policy in respect of prices and, in particular, for studying and reporting upon all Ministerial proposals which can affect prices.

A special secretariat will be established in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to assist the work of the committee.

Cabinet decided to arrange for the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Prices to conduct immediate inquiries into prices of goods with high import content which have not fallen following the exchange rate appreciation in December 1972.

In addition, Ministers who are members of the Economic Committee are to be invited to submit, as a matter of urgency, proposals for action which might affect prices.

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