

A.B.C. BROADCAST BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. E.G. WHITLAM, QC, MP,
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On 8 December - less than three weeks from now - you will be voting on two questions of great importance to Australia's future and the prosperity of each one of us. You will be voting in two referendums to decide whether to give the Australian Parliament the power to make laws about prices and incomes.

I want you to vote YES on both questions. If you do, you will be giving the national Parliament and the national Government an essential weapon to fight inflation and to help keep prices down.

Rising prices are a problem in almost every country in the world. Indeed, much of Australia's inflation has been caused by inflation in larger, wealthier countries. The Australian Government has done much to counter it. We have introduced a Prices Justification Tribunal. We have cut tariffs. We have revalued the dollar twice. And we have introduced a wide range of other fiscal and monetary measures.

Despite these efforts, the battle is not yet won. For there is no simple magic cure for inflation - especially when the national Government is denied the full armory of economic weapons. Don't let us fight inflation with one arm tied behind our backs. The powers we seek are essential powers. The national Parliaments of all comparable countries have these powers - and use them. In Australia, the States have the powers - but they have not used them.

They have refused to refer them to the national Parliament. We believe that if such powers are to be effective they must be uniform, immediate and unchallengeable in their application. Only the national Government can act in this way. Inflation is a national problem which demands national answers. This is accepted by the Governments of the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, and all other western countries.

Our opponents say that the national Parliament should not be given powers over prices and incomes. Yet in the same breath they have called for a prices and incomes freeze. I don't blame you for wondering just what they believe in. But you can be quite clear about what my Government believes in. We will not impose any overall, arbitrary freeze. Our powers, if you grant them to us, will be used carefully, selectively, with restraint and discrimination.

The simple truth is that the States have refused to act together against inflation. Our opponents know, although they will not admit it, that the largest States have refused at a special conference and at subsequent meetings to co-operate with the Australian Government. One Premier would not even come to dinner with me to discuss the problem. The time has now come for positive and decisive action.

On 8 December you can help fight inflation by writing the word YES in both squares on the ballot paper. You can ensure that pension increases and the savings of people on fixed incomes have real value. You can ensure that the new wage today need not mean inflated prices at the supermarket tomorrow. You can ensure that all incomes - not just wages - will be subject to fair and equal scrutiny. You can ensure, by voting YES, that the national Government is given every possible weapon to fight inflation and help keep prices down. In this way you will help to strengthen and safeguard the very real prosperity we are now enjoying.