



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 306

21 August 1974

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, today announced the appointment of the Royal Commission into Human Relationships.

The establishment of this Commission follows a resolution of the House of Representatives in September 1973 that an inquiry of this nature should be undertaken.

The Chairman of the Commission is the Hon. Elizabeth Evatt, a Deputy President of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, and the other members are the Most Rev. Felix Arnott, Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane and Metropolitan of the Province of Queensland, and Anne Deveson, a prominent Sydney journalist.

The Commission will commence its task immediately. However, it is not expected that Justice Evatt's commitment to the Chairmanship will be full-time until early next year.

Mr. Whitlam said that the Commission's task is to look into and report upon the external pressures existing in our society which place a stress upon relationships between people.

The terms of reference include such matters as sex education and family planning, related medical training and services and the position of women in relation to these subjects.

"These matters are relevant to the every day life of Australians and the Government considers that the establishment of the Commission will allow all interested parties to put their views freely and frankly. The interim reports to be presented by this Commission will enable us to identify those stresses which society places on individuals and relationships and the ultimate recommendations of the Commission will offer ways and means for the people of this country to be better able to meet the greater pressures arising from technological and social change which we find in the world around us."

"The three Commissioners are well suited to consider the matters under reference and I am confident that considerable benefit will derive from their inquiries."

A copy of the terms of reference is attached.

CANBERRA, A.C.T.

Royal Commission into Human Relationships

Terms of Reference

To inquire into and report upon the family, social, educational, legal and sexual aspects of male and female relationships, so far as those matters are relevant to the powers and functions of the Australian Parliament and Government, including powers and functions in relation to the Territories:

To give particular emphasis to the concept of responsible parenthood, to have regard to experience in other countries and to include in your inquiry the following aspects of the said matters:-

- (a) the extent of relevant existing education programs, including sex education programs, and their effectiveness in promoting responsible sexual behaviour and providing a sound basis in the fundamentals of male and female relationships in the Australian social environment;
- (b) the extent of relevant existing programs in medical schools and their adequacy to provide comprehensive medical training in contraceptive techniques, in the physical, psychological and sexual problems experienced by women in adapting to marriage and before, during and after menstruation, and in matters relating to pregnancy, fertility control, spontaneous and induced abortions and childbirth and to encourage acceptance by the medical profession of its

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responsibilities in the field of contraceptive counselling;

(c) the provision, adequacy and effectiveness of existing family planning facilities, educational and activational information on family planning, and methods of evaluation of all family planning techniques;

(d) the social, economic, psychological and medical pressures on women in determining whether to proceed with unplanned or unwanted pregnancies, having regard to:-

(i) the adequacy of housing, child-minding centres, pre-school centres, domestic assistance for families and working mothers, assistance to single parent families, other forms of assistance for mothers employed in industry, and adoption procedures;

(ii) the disabilities of families with handicapped children; and

(iii) the social status of women in the community; the social, psychological and medical results of termination of, or and failure to terminate such pregnancies;

(e) the adequacy and effectiveness of existing medico-legal determinations in relation to termination of pregnancy, the incidence of such terminations, the factors influencing their occurrence, the adequacy of medical training in and evaluation of methods of

- termination, consultative rights of the family or other persons concerned and the adequacy and effectiveness of pregnancy support services; and
- (f) any other matters in relation to the family, social, educational, legal and sexual aspects of male and female relationships to which the attention of the Commission is directed by the Prime Minister in the course of the inquiry.

To make recommendations as to measures that are desirable with respect to the foregoing matters under existing or future laws of the Australian Parliament or of the Territories (including laws providing for grants to the States) and to indicate whether these measures should be implemented through existing bodies or through government instrumentalities to be created.

The Commission may present interim reports on any aspect of its terms of reference.