



# PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No. 448  
12 February 1975

## SENATE VACANCY

The Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, today released the texts of two documents relating to the question of the Senate vacancy.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.

Telex Sent to Sir Charles Court,  
Premier  
Parliament House  
Perth, W.A.

IN JANUARY 1952 SIR ROSS MCLARTY WROTE TO ALL PREMIERS ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE FIRST CASUAL VACANCY IN THE SENATE AFTER THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM OF ELECTION. IN THIS LETTER HE PROPOSED THE ADOPTION OF A CONVENTION FOR THE EXERCISE BY STATE PARLIAMENTS OF THEIR POWERS UNDER SECTION 15 OF THE AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION. THE PREMIER OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA HAS INDICATED THE AGREEMENT OF SIR THOMAS PLAYFORD WITH THE PROPOSAL OF SIR ROSS MCLARTY TO ESTABLISH THE CONVENTION WHICH HAS BEEN ADHERED TO SINCE THAT TIME. I BELIEVE ONLY THE FILES HELD BY YOUR DEPARTMENT WOULD CONTAIN THE COMPLETE CORRESPONDENCE FROM ALL STATE PREMIERS. IN ORDER TO CLARIFY THE STATUS OF THIS CONVENTION, I ASK YOU TO PUBLICLY RELEASE THIS CORRESPONDENCE.

E.G. WHITLAM

February 12, 1975