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PRIME MINISTER

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COMMITTEE ON OFFICIAL ESTABLISHMENTS

An independent Committee on Official Establishments has been appointed to advise the Government on the maintenance, operation, conservation and longer term improvement of the four official residences of the Commonwealth Government.

These official establishments are Government House, The Lodge, Kirribilli House and Admiralty House.

Kirribilli House is used chiefly for distinguished guests from overseas. Admiralty House has been the Sydney home of the Governor General for a long time.

The Committee will advise on the proper conservation of the four establishments economically and in a fashion that enhances the history of early Australia.

They are part of the National Estate and it is essential that they be conserved in a way that ensures and enhances their aesthetic and historic significance. Redecoration should not be at the whim of the occupants of the day.

The Chairman of the Committee on Official Establishments will be Mr Andrew Grimwade, President, Council of Trustees, National Gallery of Victoria. Other members of Mr Guilford Bell, Dame Helen Blaxland, Mr James Cope (former Speaker of the House of Representatives) and Mrs Ruth Gullett. The Committee will be serviced by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

From time to time objects come on the market which would be suitable for one or other of these four official residences, and which should be preserved in the national interest.

The Committee will have the task of advising the Government on the purchase of such objects.

The official United States guest house, Blair House, in Washington, is managed by a committee which operates in this way. As a result, not only Blair House, but the furnishings in it, are of great historical value.