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PRIME MINISTER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT - AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL GALLERY:
DIRECTOR AND SECRETARY/MANAGER

The Government has decided to recommend to Executive Council the appointment of Mr James Mollison as the first Director of the Australian National Gallery for a term of seven years. The Government has also decided to appoint a Secretary/Manager to manage the administrative and financial affairs of the Gallery.

These two statutory appointments will ensure a proper complement of artistic and administrative skills within the Gallery's top management.

Mr Mollison has carried out the duties of Director since 1971 and was selected from a wide field of applicants who responded to an advertisement placed in Australia and overseas in September last year.

Mr Mollison had already made a major contribution to the development of the National Collection. The quality of acquisitions purchased under Mr Mollison's guidance has already established an international reputation for the National Gallery. The new Director's knowledge of and commitment to the visual arts is well known and the Government is confident he will continue to bring imagination and flair to the important task before him.

The Director will, as executive officer, be responsible for the overall conduct of Gallery affairs. In particular, the Director will concern himself with the direction of artistic policy, the development of the National Collection and all professional matters relating to the acquisition of works of art, conservation and research and the exhibition of the National Collection.

Negotiations with the successful applicant for the position of Secretary/Manager are almost finalised. The Secretary/Manager will be Secretary of the Council and will be responsible for the important administrative and financial affairs of the Gallery in all their aspects. This will free the Director to undertake those tasks for which he was primarily appointed and make the best use of the professional skills of both.

The Government will also be proposing new administrative procedures to the Gallery Council designed in association with these appointments, to ensure the development of a distinguished National Collection on the most favourable terms in the national interest.

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