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PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

13 OCTOBER 1978

ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

The Prime Minister has written to State Premiers and to the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory concerning employment and training of Aborigines.

He has informed Premiers that, under the National Employment Strategy for Aborigines, Commonwealth Departments have been asked to renew efforts towards employing Aborigines and identifying positions where an Aboriginal background could be a significant factor in the efficient performance of the jobs concerned.

He has also said that the Commonwealth Department of Construction now requires tenderers, in areas where Aborigines comprise a significant proportion of the population, to consult with the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations regarding the possibility of employing and training Aborigines.

The Prime Minister sought the cooperation of State Premiers and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory in promoting the employment of Aborigines in State and local government.

The Prime Minister asked the Premiers and Chief Minister to consider inserting a clause into specifications for State works similar to that for Commonwealth works and to consider giving the opportunities to contract for small-scale works being carried out in or adjacent to Aboriginal communities.

With regard to training for Aborigines, the Prime Minister said the Commonwealth Government was undertaking a review of all existing training schemes to assess their effectiveness and see if any new steps needed to be taken.

He asked the Premiers and the Chief Minister to participate in the review of existing training schemes.

The Prime Minister also asked the Premiers and the Chief Minister to examine the possibility of providing training opportunities, over and above normal departmental requirements, to enable Aborigines to receive basic skills and work experience in a number of areas. Commonwealth financial assistance under the National Employment and Training (NEAT) Scheme would be available to fund such training.