



PRIME MINISTER

MINISTERIAL CHANGES

I have today recommended to His Excellency the Governor-General changes in the Ministry consequent upon expanding activity in the energy field and consequent also upon other ministerial vacancies. His Excellency has indicated that he will swear Ministers affected by the changes at Government House at 10.00 a.m. tomorrow.

Senator Webster, Minister for Science and the Environment, has indicated an interest in serving in another capacity outside the Parliament. The Government proposes to appoint Senator Webster as High Commissioner to New Zealand. The Government attaches great importance to the closest contact between the two administrations, and Senator Webster's understanding of the innermost processes of Government will add to the significance of our representation in New Zealand.

Senator Webster has served in the Government with distinction, and as Minister for Science and the Environment has presided over the successful amalgamation of those portfolio interests, the restructuring of CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology, and development of Australia's activity in Antarctic affairs. Coincidentally there has been a steady growth in Australia/New Zealand co-operation in the scientific field, a development with which Senator Webster is closely identified. I am sure Australia will be well served by Senator Webster's continuing contribution in this new field.

Because of the growing importance of energy policy, and its inter-relationship with other major areas of Government activity, I have decided that it will be more workable in the period ahead to make this area the responsibility of a senior Minister in the Cabinet. There is a close affinity between energy matters and a number of other portfolio interests. The need for the closest co-ordination with State Governments in the development of truly national energy policies also requires that a senior Cabinet Minister work in this area.

Availability and pricing of energy are fundamental to the effective functioning of our economy, and indeed the world economy. The development of our energy resources, in partnership with State Governments and industry, interacts substantially for example

with private sector investment, growth of industry and employment, trade policy, transport policy and foreign policy. There is a need to strengthen our industrial base and encourage to a greater extent the processing of minerals in Australia.

Australia is partly dependent on imported crude oil, but with prudent and imaginative policies our abundance of other energy reserves should be a growing source of prosperity in the years ahead.

I have recommended to the Governor-General that he appoint Senator Carrick as Minister for the renamed portfolio of National Development and Energy.

Senator Carrick will be giving priority to a number of major issues in the period immediately ahead - including encouragement of energy related projects approved by the Loan Council today and further initiatives to expand coal fired electricity generation. Other issues include the scope for encouraging greater use of readily available electricity, natural gas, liquid petroleum gas and coal; conservation; exploration; and alternative technologies such as coal liquefaction, methanol from gas, ethanol from vegetable products and shale oil.

Work has been proceeding on these and other issues under the guidance of Mr Newman, and I record here with gratitude the contribution he has made in developing a national energy policy over the past two years.

Mr Newman will be the new Minister for Productivity. He will also be Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Federal Affairs, and in that capacity will continue to have a co-ordinating role in the follow-up of the Callaghan Report.

Mr Nixon, as an interim measure, has been carrying the portfolio of Primary Industry as well as being Minister for Transport. As from tomorrow, Mr Nixon will continue as Minister for Primary Industry but will relinquish the Transport portfolio.

In line with my view that Ministers should be given an opportunity to become familiar with the wider area of government administration, I have decided upon other Ministerial changes.

Mr Hunt will be the new Minister for Transport and will be a member of the Cabinet. I have also recommended to the Governor-General that Mr MacKellar be appointed Minister for Health, Mr Macphee, Minister for Immigration, Mr Fife, Minister for Education, and Mr Garland, Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs.

Two new Ministers will be appointed to the Ministry to take up the vacant places. I have recommended that Senator Scott be appointed Minister for Special Trade Representations and Mr David Thomson, MC, be appointed Minister for Science and the Environment.

Consequent upon these Ministerial changes, there will be changes in appointments as Minister Assisting. Mr MacKellar will be Minister Assisting the Prime Minister; Senator Scott, Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Resources; Senator Chaney, Minister Assisting the Minister for National Development and Energy; Mr Garland, Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry and Commerce; Mr Macphee, Minister Assisting the Treasurer; and as indicated above, Mr Newman will be Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Federal Affairs.

Appointments as Minister Assisting will also take effect from tomorrow. Other than the change in title for the new Department of National Development and Energy, there are no consequent departmental changes; and no increase in the number of Departments or the number of Ministers.

There is full opportunity for Ministers not in the Cabinet to attend Cabinet discussions at any time their portfolio interests are affected. There is no significance therefore in the order in which portfolios as such are listed. Ministers are sworn in order of Ministerial seniority and listed accordingly. The full Ministry list is attached.

7 December 1979.

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT

Third Fraser Ministry

- * 1. Prime Minister THE RT. HON. MALCOLM FRASER, C.H., M.P.
- * 2. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Resources THE RT. HON. J. D. ANTHONY, M.P.
- * 3. Minister for Industry and Commerce THE RT. HON. PHILLIP LYNCH, M.P.
- * 4. Minister for Primary Industry THE HON. P. J. NIXON, M.P.
- * 5. Minister for National Development & Energy, Vice-President of the Executive Council and Leader of the Government in the Senate SENATOR THE HON. J. L. CARRICK
- * 6. Minister for Industrial Relations THE HON. A. A. STREET, M.P.
- * 7. Treasurer THE HON. JOHN HOWARD, M.P.
- * 8. Minister for Foreign Affairs THE HON. ANDREW PEACOCK, M.P.
- * 9. Minister for Defence THE HON. D. J. KILLEN, M.P.
- *10. Minister for Social Security SENATOR THE HON. MARGARET GUILFOYLE
- *11. Minister for Finance THE HON. ERIC ROBINSON, M.P.
- *12. Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs and Leader of the House THE HON. IAN VINER, M.P.
- *13. Attorney-General SENATOR THE HON. PETER DURACK, Q.C.
- *14. Minister for Transport THE HON. RALPH J. HUNT, M.P.
- 15. Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister THE HON. M.J.R. MACKELLAR, M.P.
- 16. Minister for Veterans' Affairs & Minister Assisting the Minister for Primary Industry THE HON. EVAN ADERMANN, M.P.
- 17. Minister for Administrative Services & Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence THE HON. JOHN McLEAY, M.P.
- 18. Minister for Productivity and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Federal Affairs THE HON. KEVIN NEWMAN, M.P.
- 19. Minister for Post and Telecommunications THE HON. A. A. STALEY, M.P.
- 20. Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and Minister Assisting the Treasurer THE HON. IAN MACPHEE, M.P.
- 21. Minister for Education THE HON. WAL FIFE, M.P.
- 22. Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for Industry and Commerce THE HON. R.V. GARLAND, M.P.
- 23. Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for the Capital Territory THE HON. R. J. ELLICOTT, Q.C., M.P.
- 24. Minister for Housing and Construction THE HON. RAY GROOM, M.P.
- 25. Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Minister Assisting the Minister for National Development and Energy SENATOR THE HON. F.M. CHANEY
- 26. Minister for Special Trade Representations and Minister Assisting the Minister for Trade and Resources SENATOR THE HON. DOUGLAS SCOTT
- 27. Minister for Science and the Environment THE HON. DAVID THOMPSON, M.C., M.P.