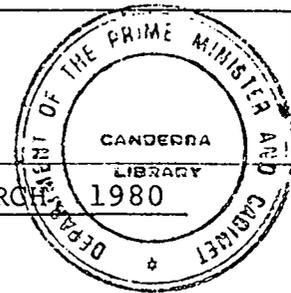


**PRIME MINISTER**FOR MEDIAFRIDAY, 14 MARCH 1980THE WOOL DISPUTE

The Government, woolbrokers and growers met today for a very full discussion concerning the damaging and critical wool industry dispute involving the Storeman and Packers Union.

The organisations represented were the Wool Council of Australia, the National Farmers Federation, the Australian Woolselling Brokers Employers Federation and the National Council of Woolselling Brokers of Australia.

In the discussion today, everyone agreed that the industry needed to maintain its determination to uphold the arbitration system and to ensure that the dispute was resolved as soon as possible.

Everyone at the meeting agreed not to accept the blackmail being pursued by the Storemen and Packers Union. As a result, the parties came to a number of specific agreements, which would be applied progressively from the beginning of the next working week, Monday 17 March, unless an agreement resolving the dispute was reached over the weekend. In this context, the meeting noted that a conference called by the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission would be meeting tomorrow to discuss these matters.

The brokers told the Government that present circumstances, in which the normal roster of sales had been disrupted since before Christmas, would make it necessary to cease forthwith all woolstore operations unless the strike in Melbourne and Sydney ceased immediately and normal work resumed in all woolselling centres. Amongst the reasons given was the absence of effective international buying support as a result of the forced cessation of sales. The point was also made that it had become increasingly difficult to ensure satisfactory standards of clip preparation because of the current dispute.

The brokers agreed that if the dispute still continued after the weekend, they would withdraw the facility of deducting union dues and would withdraw over-award payments. The brokers also said that they would continue with the preparation of the case for deregistration. The Government said that as soon as that case was lodged it would give full support.

The meeting put to the Commonwealth Government that it should bring down export regulations which would enable it to control the export of raw wool. The purpose of those regulations would be to make sure that the industry as a whole had a unified approach to the dispute, having regard to the gross disruptions to normal trade that had occurred. The Government, for its part, undertook to prepare those regulations speedily. The regulations would be ready by next Tuesday. The Wool Council of Australia, the National Farmers Federation, the Australian Wool Selling Brokers Employers Federation, the National Council of Woolselling Brokers of Australia, and the Government, recognised that this request to the Government, and decision by the Government, would bring the

whole industry to a halt, pending a resolution of the dispute.

The Government and the organisations represented at today's meeting all mutually supported, and were committed to maintaining, all the foregoing measures.

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