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**PRIME MINISTER**

FOR MEDIA

14 June 1985

The Commonwealth Government will meet the costs of heart and lung transplant patient Mr Les Pates.

The announcement of the decision was made following discussion between the Acting Prime Minister, Mr Lionel Bowen, and the Acting Minister for Finance, Mr Chris Hurford.

The decision has been reached after new information that the proposed operation, which would be conducted in Pittsburgh was no longer considered experimental by the doctors involved. It has been confirmed the operation has a success rate in excess of 60%.

Mr Bowen said that given the latest information the Government believed any doubt that remained as to Mr Pates' eligibility for assistance should be resolved in his favour. He said the Government wished to take a prompt decision in Mr Pates' interest rather than let the matter drag on.

He said that funds would be provided initially for Mr Pates to travel to the US for an assessment of his suitability for the operation and that, subject to that assessment being positive, further funding would be provided.