



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

19 JANUARY 1987

TASMANIAN FORESTRY DISPUTE

The Prime Minister, the Minister for Primary Industry, Mr John Kerin and the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Environment, Mr Barry Cohen, today reaffirmed the Commonwealth's determination both to protect those National Estate areas in Tasmania that may be of World Heritage value, and to resolve once and for all the issue of whether there are viable alternatives to forestry operations in the contentious National Estate areas.

The Commonwealth continues to believe that it is necessary for a full and careful review to take place as to whether there are environmentally and economically prudent and feasible logging alternatives within Tasmania to existing logging plans for the contentious National Estate areas.

The Government has not yet concluded its consideration as to the most appropriate machinery for such a review, the best way to ensure that possible World Heritage values are fully protected during the course of it, and appropriate compensation arrangements where legitimate commercial interests are affected by the review process.

Further consultations will be held over the next two weeks with all relevant interests. The forest industries have indicated a desire to have consultations, following the provision of detailed information by the Commonwealth. The Government also will be consulting with the ACTU. The Government wishes to allow every opportunity for these consultations to lead to the co-operation of industry in undertaking the review.

The Government will also take advantage of the advice of a senior expert of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), which advises the World Heritage Committee on natural heritage values. The expert, Mr Jim Thorsell, will visit Australia this week.

The Commonwealth is hopeful of industry and State Government co-operation, but will consider appropriate legislation if it becomes apparent that this is the only way that the necessary review and associated environment protection arrangements can be put in place.
