



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

2 DECEMBER 1991

The final sectoral reports of the Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) Working Groups were tabled in Parliament today.

The reports, covering nine major industry sectors, mark the culmination of a cooperative process initiated by the Government in August 1990, involving representatives from industry, union, conservation, consumer and welfare organisations, Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments.

The Working Groups have sought to provide recommendations to Government on ways of moving key industry sectors onto an ecologically and economically sustainable pathway for the long term.

Achieving ecologically sustainable development is critical if governments are to ensure that not only present, but future, generations of Australians benefit from sustained improvements in their quality of life in both material and non-material terms.

Australia's environmental problems will not be immediately solved by these reports - rather, they mark the beginning of a long term process of transition. They provide an outline of the current position of our industries, and recommend a number of actions which can be pursued, in order to make those industries more sustainable.

The reports will provide a valuable resource for all levels of Government to draw on in developing strategies to facilitate the transition to ESD.

It is my hope that by the middle of next year, we will be well down the track of having developed an initial national strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development.

I thank the Chairs of the ESD process, Professor Stuart Harris, Professor David Throsby and Dr Roy Green, for their work and guidance of the nine groups charged with drafting the reports. I also extend my thanks to the individual working group participants, and to the organisations they represented, who devoted substantial resources and expertise to this process.

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The Government is considering ways of harnessing the cooperation shown within groups and maintaining the involvement of key interest groups in the process.

The continued cooperation of State, Territory and local governments, will be very important in carrying the process of ESD forward. I am pleased that Premiers and Chief Ministers have agreed to participate in the Intergovernmental Ecologically Sustainable Development Working Group which the Commonwealth proposed to consider the outcomes of the ESD process.

A Round Table with key interest groups is planned in the near future. The meeting will be chaired by a senior officer of my Department, and will discuss their further involvement in the ESD process, and wider public consultation requirements, during the next phase of strategy development and implementation.

The nine sectoral Working Group reports cover Agriculture, Energy Production and Distribution, Energy Use, Fisheries, Forest Use, Manufacturing, Mining, Tourism and Transport. Two further reports will also be shortly released. They are the ESD Intersectoral Report prepared by the ESD Chairs, covering issues common to the key industry sectors (such as public health, employment, equity, research and development, and biodiversity), and a separate report on greenhouse which, together with the Working Group reports, examines options to achieve the Government's interim planning targets for emissions of greenhouse gases, and the most cost-effective combination of measures needed to achieve these targets.