



PRIME MINISTER

**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J.KEATING, MP
MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY, TECHNOLOGY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Minister for Industry, Technology and Regional Development, Mr Alan Griffiths, has today tendered to me his resignation from the Ministry. I have advised the Governor-General to accept the resignation.

Mr Griffiths has informed me that he has serious concerns about possible misuse of funds he has received for party political purposes; possible misuse of the facilities of his Melbourne electorate office; and irregularities in documentation relating to electoral fund raising and expenditure.

He told me that he had no involvement at all in any of those matters and that his lawyers are satisfied that on the material presented to them in respect of those matters in their opinion he is not guilty of any wrongdoing or impropriety. However, Mr Griffiths has informed me that in the best interests of the Government and the ALP he has decided to tender his resignation so that these matters can be fully investigated. He has expressed to me his absolute confidence that after that process is concluded his name will be fully cleared.

The Australian Federal Police have been asked to examine these matters and determine whether an investigation is warranted.

In addition to any consideration by the Federal Police, Mr Griffiths has asked me to arrange for a full investigation by an independent person to determine whether his own conduct in these matters has met appropriate standards of Ministerial behaviour. He has expressed confidence that such an inquiry would exonerate him and permit him to recontest his ministerial position at the earliest opportunity.

I intend to grant Mr Griffiths' request for an independent inquiry and have informed him that I would advise the Caucus not to fill the vacancy until after the investigation is concluded. At that time, if appropriate, I expect Mr Griffiths to put his name forward to the Caucus for re-election to office.

I expect to be in a position to announce new Ministerial arrangements next week

Mr Griffiths will be available to comment this evening at 7.30pm at 4 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

SYDNEY
22 JANUARY, 1994