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PRIME MINISTER

22/95

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, MP

INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY

The Government has decided to recommend to the Governor-General in Executive Council the appointment of Mr Ron McLeod AM, Deputy Secretary in the Department of Defence, as the next Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security. It is proposed that the appointment will take effect on 6 April 1995. The Leader of the Opposition has been consulted on the proposed appointment.

Mr McLeod has had a long and distinguished public service career. He has served the Government in a number of senior positions, including most recently as Deputy Secretary, Budget and Management in the Department of Defence and, during 1994, as Chairman of the Review Group which reported on possible changes to the Public Service Act.

The office of Inspector-General was set up by the Government in 1986 following the second Hope Royal Commission into Australia's security and intelligence agencies to ensure that the agencies act with legality and propriety. It occupies a central place in the arrangements for the accountability of Australia's security and intelligence agencies. The office is a demanding one requiring the highest standards of ability. I am confident that Mr McLeod's skills and experience make him well suited to the task.

Mr McLeod succeeds Mr Roger Holdich AM, who has almost completed two terms as Inspector-General. Mr Holdich has decided to resign his appointment some six months early in order to give his successor time to settle in before he is required to put into effect whatever changes the Government decides upon as a result of any recommendations concerning the office of Inspector-General that may arise from the Commission of Inquiry into ASIS.

Mr Holdich has had a long career of public service, including in my department, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Public Service Commission. As Inspector-General of Intelligence and Security since 1989 Mr Holdich has served the Government with distinction and integrity and has made a particular contribution to the further development of arrangements for accountability in the intelligence community. I wish him well in his retirement.

**CANBERRA
21 MARCH 1995**