



PRIME MINISTER

PRIVACY LEGISLATION

I took the opportunity of today's Premiers Conference to raise the Commonwealth's concerns regarding proposals to implement a privacy regime for the private sector. The Commonwealth opposes such proposals which will further increase compliance costs for all Australian businesses, large and small.

At a time when all heads of government acknowledge the need to reduce the regulatory burden, proposals for new compulsory regimes would be counterproductive. On those grounds, the Commonwealth will not be implementing privacy legislation for the private sector.

I asked the Premiers and Chief Ministers not to introduce legislation on this matter within their own jurisdictions. Both the Northern Territory and Queensland have agreed not to introduce such legislation. Other States have indicated that they will consider the Commonwealth's request. I will be writing to the States on this matter.

I noted to the Premiers the Commonwealth's offer of the services of the Federal Privacy Commissioner to assist business in the development of voluntary codes of conduct and to meet privacy standards.

21 March 1997