



PRIME MINISTER

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PUBLIC LENDING RIGHT TO AUSTRALIAN AUTHORS

The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, announced today that he had approved in principle a Public Lending Right scheme to benefit Australian authors.

Under the scheme, whose cost would be borne entirely by the Australian Government, Australian authors would be paid a specified sum, probably fifty cents, for each copy of their books available for loan from Australian public libraries.

Mr. Whitlam said that the undertaking to introduce such a scheme was given in his policy speech in 1972. A report has been prepared by a committee made up of representatives of the Literature Board of the Australian Council for the Arts, the library profession, the Australian Society of Authors and the Australian Book Publishers Association.

Mr. Whitlam said the plan did not require legislation and would apply as from 1 April 1974. Amounts equivalent to 25% of the sums due for a full year would be paid to writers before the end of the financial year.

The cost of the scheme in its first full year would be approximately \$530,000.

Mr. Whitlam said that the scheme offered justice to Australian authors which was long overdue. Seven European countries already had such schemes, and New Zealand introduced one early this year.

Payments based on a stocktaking survey of Australian libraries would be available to Australian authors, wherever they resided, and to authors normally resident in Australia. Payments would not be restricted to books published in Australia.

Publishers would also receive the benefits of the scheme: in addition to the amounts paid to authors, an extra 25% would be paid to eligible publishers - i.e. Australian-registered publishing companies paying Australian tax, or non-profit publishers such as the University Presses.

Mr. Whitlam said that since libraries would not be expected to bear any of the cost involved, there would be no burden on local government resources or State Government funds.

The Prime Minister expressed the Government's thanks to those who had helped develop the scheme, especially to the libraries of Australia whose co-operation had made possible the early completion of the report.

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