

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR ROBERT MENZIES
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

14TH MAY, 1964

ACADEMIC SALARIES

Honourable members will recall that last year, when announcing the Government's programme of aid for universities during the 1964-66 triennium, I foreshadowed the establishment of an Inquiry to advise the Government on the levels of academic salaries which could appropriately be adopted by the Commonwealth for the purpose of calculating recurrent grants for universities.

We have now reached certain decisions about this Inquiry. It will be conducted by Mr. Justice Eggleston of the Commonwealth Industrial Court and of the Supreme Courts of the A.C.T. and Norfolk Island.

The Government will appoint two assessors whose function will be to assist the Inquiry with expert advice and analysis based on a special knowledge of universities and government interests in the subject. I have written to the Chairman of the Vice-Chancellors Committee and to the President of the Federation of Australian University Staff Associations, inviting them to submit jointly a panel of three names for the Government to consider when appointing the assessor with special knowledge of the universities interest. The other assessor will be a person with experience in government service.

The terms of reference of the Inquiry are :-

To advise the Government on the standard salary or range of salaries for a professor and the standard salary range for a reader or associate professor which the Inquiry considers should be adopted as a measure of academic salaries to be used by the Australian Universities Commission for the purpose of recommending grants to be made to universities, including the Australian National University, for recurrent expenditure.

It is our intention that the Inquiry should proceed in an atmosphere of informality and without being given a statutory basis. It will thus dispense with sworn evidence, verbatim records and public hearings. Actual procedure will be a matter for decision and announcement by Mr. Justice Eggleston. In due course, the Inquiry will be communicating with interested parties to invite them to submit views in writing.

I would remind honourable members that the Commonwealth fully accepts that salaries paid in a State university are, and must remain, ultimately a matter for that university and its State Government. The basic purpose of the present Inquiry is to provide guidance for the Commonwealth and, as already announced, its findings will be applied retrospectively to 1st January, 1964, in relation to recurrent grants offered by the Commonwealth to States for their universities. The Commonwealth will also adopt the findings as a basis for its recurrent grants to the Australian National University from the same date.
