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AUSTRALIAN FORESTRY COUNCIL

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt.Hon. Sir Robert Menzies

The Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Menzies, announced today that agreement has been reached between all Australian Governments to set up an Australian Forestry Council as a national advisory body on forestry matters.

The Council will provide the means for the mutual exchange of information and views between the State and Commonwealth Governments. It will co-ordinate research into problems affecting the establishment, development, management and fire protection of all forests and the utilisation of forest products, and thus help to ensure the maintenance and improvement of the quality of forests and forest products. It will assist in co-ordinating the work of State and Commonwealth Governments and also private enterprise in the development of Australian forestry.

Sir Robert said that many of our forest areas fulfil an important function in that they protect the catchment areas of many of our major rivers and water storages. Moreover, the Australian forestry industry is an important one in the Australian economy; the annual factory-door value of sawn timber, plywood and veneers, fibre and particle boards, pulp and paper manufactured from Australian forests is about £220M.

The Council will enable Australia to make the best possible use of resources in men, technical knowledge, available land and money and to co-ordinate activities in the field of forestry practice and forestry research.

The Council will comprise the Minister for National Development as Chairman, the Minister for Territories and the Minister in charge of forests from each State. Provision has been made for Ministers responsible for closely related activities to be co-opted when problems of particular concern to them are under discussion. The Council will be assisted by a Standing Committee of Commonwealth and State officers.

CANBERRA,
23rd July, 1964.