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APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL FOR ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr Harold Holt

Following the decision announced on 2nd November to establish a Council for Aboriginal Affairs, significant progress has been made.

The Members of the Council in addition to the Chairman, Dr Coombes, whose appointment was announced at that time, have now been decided upon. They are Professor W. E. H. Stanner, MA, Ph.D, and Mr Barrie Dexter, MA (Hons.) Dip. Ed. Mr Dexter will be the executive member of the Council and will direct the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs, which is being established to serve the Council.

Professor Stanner is Professor of Anthropology and Sociology in the Institute of Advanced Studies of the Australian National University. He has had a long personal and academic association with the aboriginal people and will bring to bear extensive knowledge of their life and culture on the problems of their advancement. He has also had extensive experience as an anthropologist in Africa and the South Seas and is familiar with policies being adopted in these and other areas in the advancement of native peoples.

Mr Dexter has, since 1964, been Australian Ambassador in Laos. He has had a distinguished career in the Department of External Affairs and has seen service in the USA, Africa and South East Asia. Mr Dexter will return from Laos early in the New Year to take up his new appointment.

Work is already in progress on the establishment of the office and Members of the Council will be establishing early contact with Commonwealth and State authorities in the field, with academic and other groups with interest in, and knowledge relevant to aboriginal advancement and with representative groups of the aboriginal people themselves.

I am confident that, when these contacts have been established, prompt and effective progress will be made in the necessary studies and in the formulation of Commonwealth policies for aboriginal advancement.

CANBERRA,
24 November, 1967