

FOR PRESS :

COMMONWEALTH/STATE MINISTERS' MEETING ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Commonwealth and State Ministers, with responsibility for environmental matters, met for the first time today in Canberra. Those present were -

- Commonwealth - The Honourable Peter Howson, M.P.,
Minister for the Environment,
Aborigines and the Arts
- N.S.W. - The Honourable J. G. Beale, M.L.A.,
Minister for Environment Control
- VIC. - The Honourable V. O. Dickie, M.L.C.,
Minister of State Development
- QLD. - The Honourable J. Bjelke-Petersen, M.L.A.,
Premier and Minister for State
Development
- S.A. - The Honourable G. R. Broomhill, M.H.A.,
Minister for Conservation
- W.A. - The Honourable J. T. Tonkin, M.L.A.,
Premier and Minister for Environmental
Protection
- TAS. - The Honourable K. O. Lyons, M.H.A.,
Deputy Premier and Chief Secretary.

At today's meeting, Ministers exchanged information on existing legislation and gave their views on the problems of the environment in their areas and the steps that they are formulating to protect it. It was recognised that the State Governments have already been active in a wide range of fields, including national parks, wildlife, water, soil and forest conservation; and control of water and sewerage systems and air, water, oil and noise pollution.

However, it was agreed that there was a continuing need to combat pollution and to improve the quality of the environment. Ministers discussed the means of continuing Federal and State consultation and the degree to which uniformity of approach was desirable.

The Ministers decided to meet again as soon as possible and, they hope, before the end of the year. Tentatively, they have arranged to meet on 26 November in Perth at the invitation of the Premier of Western Australia. In preparation for that meeting, Commonwealth and State officers will draw up an agenda for their consideration and, in the meantime, details of legislation and administrative practice will be exchanged.

17 September 1971