



PRIME MINISTER

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TRADE PRACTICE AND OVERSEAS INVESTMENT

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. William
McMahon, C.H., M.P.

For some months past, the Government has been considering proposals for strengthening the restrictive trade practices legislation of the Commonwealth.

The issues involved have required careful and detailed consideration as they profoundly affect the future development and standards of efficiency of the Australian economy.

They also influence the most effective allocation of resources with consequent long-term impact on cost and price inflation.

The Government has now decided that the Attorney-General will make a comprehensive statement to Parliament during the present Session - probably during the next two sitting weeks.

The proposals have been considered in the context of the Government's attitude to restrictive trade practices and also its belief in a free enterprise system under which citizens have as much freedom as possible to participate in the production and distribution of the nation's wealth.

The Prime Minister went on to say that it would be remembered that the decision of the High Court in the Concrete Pipes Case had clarified the Commonwealth's Constitutional powers in the area of restrictive practices and the extent of its legislative capacity in this area.

The Government recognises the impact that such legislation can and will have on the future development of this country.

It has therefore decided that the appropriate course is to make a statement to the Parliament for debate, as a means of informing the public mind, and as a basis on which discussions with industrial, commercial and other interests can take place before a bill is prepared.

2.

During the present Session, a Treasury paper on overseas investment in Australia will also be tabled by the Treasurer.

This paper will not put forward policy proposals but will again provide the basis for discussion of a large range of issues concerning the general field of overseas investment in Australia and the desirability of controlling capital inflows in the interests of the Australian people.

It, too, will assist the Government to arrive at decisions in this area of private capital inflows.

CANBERRA,

3 May, 1972.