



## PRIME MINISTER

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### OIL INDUSTRY STRIKE

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt.  
Hon. William McMahon, CH,MP

Today I called a meeting of senior Ministers to consider the critical situation caused by the oil industry strike. The strike is a challenge by about 1,000 union members to the whole structure of conciliation and arbitration which we are determined to maintain.

It threatens to disrupt industry, cause unemployment and slow down commercial and industrial activity in Australia affecting the life of every citizen.

Let us look at the facts.

Early this year a log of claims was served by the unions upon the oil companies.

A number of strikes and stoppages occurred and after patient and painstaking effort, a Deputy President of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, Mr. Justice Moore on union assurances that the strikers had returned to work gave an interim decision which granted wage increases of \$4.30 per week for tradesmen and \$3.60 for trades assistants. He made these increases retrospective to 5 June.

Mr. Justice Moore granted these increases on assurances that the men had genuinely returned to work.

And the employers had already stated that as soon as the strike ended they were ready to continue with the hearing of the union's claims in full by the Commission.

Despite this, the strike was resumed and has continued in defiance of the decision of Mr. Justice Moore. On Friday night last, it became obvious that the ACTU was powerless to get the men back to work.

The Government objectives are twofold. The first is to ensure that the men return to work, that the refineries operate, that supplies of petrol and oil are available and that a situation in which services vital to the community are grinding to a halt should end.

The Government also believes that it must uphold the system of arbitration.

In the interests of the whole community I asked the Minister for Labor and National Service, the Minister for Shipping and Transport and the Attorney General to have immediate discussions with the oil industry employers and with the ACTU.

Discussions took place with the employers this evening and arrangements are being made to have discussions in Melbourne with the ACTU tomorrow morning.

The Ministers will report to Cabinet which will meet tomorrow, Thursday afternoon.

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CANBERRA,

26 July, 1972.