

COMMUNIQUE

MEETING OF THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. E.G. WHITLAM, AND PREMIERS
OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA AT ALBURY-WODONGA, 25 JANUARY
1973

The Prime Minister and the Premiers of New South Wales and Victoria agreed at their meeting today in Albury that there should be accelerated development of a major city in the Albury-Wodonga area. The three governments agreed to join together in implementing the project.

This growth complex would be the first of the urban and regional development projects foreshadowed by both governments and promised by the Prime Minister during his election campaign.

There was a mutual feeling, shared by all concerned that this agreement and the co-operation it engendered was a symbolic first step towards a new and more human pattern of urban living in Australia.

Precise steps for the development of the Albury-Wodonga area would be taken after the governments had examined the report of a preliminary study to be commissioned by the three Governments from the National Urban and Regional Development Authority. This study would be complementary to the work already done by the States in assessing the resources of the Albury-Wodonga region.

During the meeting held at the Albury City Hall the Prime Minister and Premiers agreed on certain principles governing the development of the new growth centre as per the attachment.

The Prime Minister and Premiers stressed that the Albury-Wodonga project was merely the first step in a comprehensive program aimed at improving urban life in Australia. This program would include other growth centres and selective decentralisation which the States had already taken important decisions to encourage.

The National Urban and Regional Development Authority was currently engaged in examining other centres in the various States to test their suitability for accelerated development such as was now to take place in Albury-Wodonga.

From the outset of the planning for the urban development of the Albury-Wodonga region, particular attention would be given to involving representatives of the local community. The governments agreed that, while the physical development of the new city should be the responsibility of a special statutory authority, it was most important that existing local interests were involved in decision making.

The Prime Minister and the Premiers agreed that throughout the development, environment should be protected and pollution controlled. They said that the natural surroundings of Albury-Wodonga presented a particularly fine opportunity to develop a city which would bring social fulfilment to the present citizens and those who will come to live in it. This opportunity must not be lost.

Provision of the necessary services to the new city should be carried out at the highest possible standard to protect the interests of other users of the Murray River.

* * * * *

POINTS OF AGREEMENT

1. The three governments will join together to develop a new growth complex in the general area of Albury-Jodonga and, to provide incentives, amenities and services, to foster and serve it.
2. A Ministerial Council will be appointed to provide the machinery for co-ordination between the three governments at the political level. The Council will comprise one Minister from each Government and they will be the Australian Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Mr. Uren, the New South Wales Minister for Decentralisation and Development, Mr. Fuller, and the Victorian Minister for State Development, Mr. Murray Byrne. There will be an interim officials committee established immediately between the three Governments to work to the Ministerial Council.
3. A development corporation will be set up as a statutory authority by the three governments to plan and develop the areas designated for new urban growth.
4. One important objective will be to ensure that the capability and experience of existing local government is used to the fullest extent possible in bringing about the accelerated growth objective. It is to be expected, however, that the growth of the new complex will require the development corporation to play a role in the development of certain projects within the existing cities.
5. The areas to be designated for new urban growth will be specified by the three governments when the feasibility studies have been completed. There will be a study area with a radius of 55 kilometers from the Union Bridge. Within that study area price stabilisation legislation will apply to the areas to be designated following the feasibility study for urban and associated development.
6. The results of the feasibility study will be considered by the Ministerial Council.
7. The areas finally designated will be acquired as they are needed for urban and associated development.
8. The three governments are agreed that land speculation should not be allowed to prejudice the success of the project and it is not intended to buy land at prices which reflect the increment in value arising from the intended development of the new growth complex.
9. The price of land to be acquired for the purposes of the project within the designated areas will be based on the market level of prices prevailing at the date of 3 October 1972, but with any necessary adjustment for general land price changes (due to factors other than the announcement of the development of the complex) during the period up to the date of actual purchase.

The appropriate Land Price stabilisation legislation will be introduced by the governments at an early date.

10. The general intent of the three governments is that in the special circumstances of Albury-Wodonga, the corporation would comprise three full-time commissioners, with executive authority, and two part-time commissioners, drawn from the local community.
11. The chairman will be nominated by the Australian Government and the two deputy chairmen by the New South Wales and Victorian Governments respectively.
12. It is agreed that the details of the corporation structure should be determined by the Council of Ministers and that provision should be made for consultative machinery with State and local agencies and other bodies. This could take the form of a Consultative Council.
13. The task of the development corporation will be to create an Australian city with a high quality of environment, imaginatively planned and developed, with respect for human requirements and for public involvement.

The development corporation will acquire, either directly or through the agency of a State authority, land in the areas designated for urban and associated development, will plan the urban environment and the pattern of land use, will make provision for necessary land development works, and the provision of fully serviced sites for government and private building development.

The corporation will be expected to involve the established Federal, State and Local Government authorities in the development of the complex as far as possible.

It will be empowered to undertake any works which it considers necessary to ensure that the development of the new urban complex is successfully achieved.

14. In respect of the overall complex the development corporation will need to be empowered to exercise statutory planning and other powers to the extent necessary to achieve these objectives.
15. It is proposed that the development corporation, unless there are exceptional circumstances, will follow a policy of providing fully serviced sites for development on a long term leasehold tenure, normally 99 years.
16. The development corporation's programme will be financed by way of Federal grants for special purposes and long term government and government guaranteed loans which carry an appropriate interest charge. In the establishment period, the corporation's administrative functions will be financed by the three governments on a basis to be agreed upon between them. It will be eligible to receive various forms of financial subsidy where this is appropriate.
17. The development corporation will be empowered to negotiate for or to provide and manage municipal type facilities and services should this be necessary in the designated areas in the development period. Where this has been done by the corporation, the provision of these services will be financed by way of

appropriate charges, under suitable arrangements made between the Australian and State Governments. When developed, the administration of the designated areas will be handed over to municipal self-government.

18. In the development of the new growth complex, priority will be given to control of pollution, including effluent disposal, and to protection of the environment not only of the centre itself but also of areas which will be affected by the establishment of this new complex.