



**PRIME MINISTER**

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 165

19 December 1973

INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, announced today that all reports of the new Industries Assistance Commission which would not cause damaging speculation would be made public as soon as they were printed. The new Industries Assistance Commission will come into operation on 1 January. The Prime Minister also said that he would honour his promise that the Government should deal with reports from the Commission within 3 months of the Government receiving the reports. This would eliminate the excessive delays which industries suffered under the previous Government when in some cases Tariff Board reports were not dealt with for periods greater than a year. In undertaking to make public as many reports as possible, as soon as possible, Mr. Whitlam said the Government had decided to ask the Commission to indicate in each report whether its release would be likely to cause speculation. Only in special cases such as those involving negotiations with State Governments would action by the Australian Government in dealing with reports from the Commission be delayed, Mr. Whitlam said.

Mr. Whitlam announced the names of the seven Commissioners appointed to the Industries Assistance Commission. The Chairman will be Mr. G.A. Rattigan, Chairman of the Tariff Board. The other Commissioners will be Messrs. D.J. Pekin, N.V. Watson, R. Boyer, G. F. Johnson, C. Conron and D. McBride.

Mr. Watson's appointment extends to June 1974. He will be appointed to the temporary Advisory Authority from 1 January and will remain with the Industries Assistance Commission only until inquiries commenced by the division of the Tariff Board of which he is the presiding member are completed.

Mr. Whitlam said the Industries Assistance Commission Act provided for the appointment of associate Commissioners to help with Commission inquiries. Appointments of associate Commissioners would be made as future needs arose. Members of the Tariff Board who are not being appointed as members of the Commission, have been offered appointment as associate Commissioners for the remaining period of their terms as members of the Board.

Mr. Whitlam said that the new Industries Assistance Commission would cover not only manufacturing industry as the Tariff Board did, but would advise this and future Governments on assistance for industries in all sectors of the economy. He believed that as far as possible, the processes whereby public policies were determined should be open to public scrutiny.

In the interests of open government, Mr. Whitlam stressed there should be the widest participation in the public inquiries conducted by the Commission. There should also, when possible, be full and informed public discussion of the Commission's report to the Government.