



PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 332

19 September 1974

GOVERNMENT TO REASSESS ANL FREIGHT RATES TO AND FROM TASMANIA

The Prime Minister, Mr E.G. Whitlam, announced tonight that the Australian Government will make an immediate reassessment of A.N.L. freight rates to and from Tasmania.

This follows strong representations by Tasmania's federal Members and Senators who met this morning with the Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, and the Minister for Transport, Mr Jones.

The Prime Minister has ordered that the reassessment should be made without delay to see if any interim assistance to Tasmania is appropriate. The Prime Minister emphasised that this move did not seek to anticipate the report of the Nimmo Royal Commission of Inquiry into Transport to and from Tasmania. This Inquiry is being held to ascertain how Tasmania is disadvantaged in terms of freight and associated costs through being the only State which has to depend on a single form of surface Transport for its links with other States.

Mr Nimmo is at present examining the methods by which the Canadian Federal Government equalises the rates charged by Canadian National Railways for its rail services across the continent and its ferry services to Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

Mr Whitlam said that in the interim before Mr Nimmo reported, he considered it essential to ensure that ANL rates should not go up by a greater percentage than had the charges applying on similar goods moving by surface transport between mainland capitals during 1973 and 1974.

Mr Whitlam said he hoped the undertaking he had given would reassure Tasmanians that their Labor Senators and Members of the House of Representatives were pursuing vigorously their representation of Tasmania's interests in Canberra.

Mr Whitlam recalled that a \$1 million subsidy was paid in 1973, towards the operations of the 'Empress of Australia'. The same amount is provided in the 1974/75 Budget announced on Tuesday night.