



**PRIME MINISTER**

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 413  
13 December 1974

STATE AGENTS-GENERAL

The Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, today denied reports that he had any intention of raising with the British Government the position of State Agents-General in London.

Mr Whitlam said he appreciated that the Agents-General had a role to perform in relation to commercial and related matters to which the States attributed considerable importance. There was, however, no suggestion that Agents-General exercised diplomatic functions, as these were the sole concern of the Australian Government.

There was no foundation whatsoever for the Queensland Premier's assertion that the question of a border with Papua New Guinea and the Torres Strait area would be raised with the British Government.

"The Premier will be aware that a first round of discussions, of an essentially preliminary nature, was held in Canberra on 13 November between officials of the Australian and Queensland Governments.

"At this meeting it was agreed that a second, and more technical, meeting be held after the Queensland elections. The expectation was that this meeting would be held in the week beginning 16 December.

"The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet was advised this week by Queensland officials that processes associated with the formation of a new Queensland Government would not be complete until 23 December and that, therefore, the proposed meeting would have to be deferred until some time in January, probably the last week in January," Mr Whitlam said.

The Prime Minister added that he had no intention of canvassing in public the matters which would be raised during his impending private talks with Her Majesty The Queen or with the British Government.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.