



PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No. 442
5 February 1975

NEW MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE

The Government has decided to establish a special committee of ministers which will be concerned primarily with the Australian Government's relations with the States.

The ministerial committee will comprise the Prime Minister, the Treasurer, the Minister for Social Security and the Minister for Urban and Regional Development. The committee will be supported by a group of officials drawn from their Departments, working as a task force.

The Australian Government will negotiate a new five-year financial assistance agreement with the States before the present agreement expires at the end of the current financial year.

The Treasurer's consultations with the State Treasurers which are now underway, are preliminary steps towards the negotiation of the new five-year agreement.

As well as being concerned with the Australian Government's relations with the States overall, the ministerial committee will examine programs of direct assistance to regions, local Government and local communities.

The Australian Government has laid considerable stress on the adoption of a regional approach to planning and decision-making.

It is now time to consolidate the Australian Government's initiatives. This consolidation involves further co-operation with State administration.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.