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PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No. 462
10 March 1975

COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Prime Minister today announced the establishment of a wide-ranging Committee of Inquiry into public libraries in Australia.

The Committee will comprise:-

Mr A. Horton, Librarian, University of New South Wales -
Chairman

Mr W.L. Brown, State Librarian, Tasmania

Professor D. McL. Lamberton, Professor of Economics,
University of Queensland

Mr D. Pickering, Senior Special Education Officer,
Department of Education, Victoria

Professor P. Tannock, Dean, Faculty of Education,
University of Western Australia

Mrs H. Trask, Principal Lecturer in Librarianship,
Kuringai College of Advanced Education.

The terms of reference of the Committee are:

- (a) To inquire into and report upon the current role and effectiveness of State, regional and municipal libraries in serving the information and recreation needs of the community including the limitations imposed by existing methods and levels of financing and staffing.
- (b) To report upon the desirable future roles for, and development of, State, regional and municipal library services, including priorities of need for these libraries; interaction with, or dependence on, developments in related fields; likely costs; manpower and training requirements; requirements for specialised library services; the need, and possible mechanisms, for the provision of Australian Government assistance.
- (c) To recommend measures necessary to give effect to these developments and means whereby these measures might be implemented.

In its report the Committee of Inquiry should pay particular attention to:

- the development of methods for evaluating the effectiveness of public libraries and library systems;

- the relationship between proposed public library policies and the Australian Library Based Information System feasibility studies, the Australian Assistance Plan and the policies planned or implemented by the Departments of Urban and Regional Development and Tourism and Recreation;
- the relationship between public libraries and libraries in education centres.

The Committee should consult widely and openly with the Australian, State and local governments, the community and professional groups (e.g. AACCBS, LAA, State Librarians Council). It should be able to commission specific studies.

The Committee will be expected to present its report by 1 December 1975 to the Special Minister of State who will have the carriage of the Inquiry for the Australian Government.