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47

PRIME MINISTERPRESS STATEMENT NO. 476
27 March 1975AUSTRALIA POLICE

The Prime Minister announced today the first steps in the formation of a service to be known as the Australia Police.

He notified the appointment of Mr Kep Enderby, Q.C., M.P., as Minister of a new Department of Police and Customs. The new Department would be formed out of the Department of Customs and Excise, the Commonwealth Police and the Police Forces of the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. The Permanent Head of the new Department is Mr A.T. Carmody formerly head of the Department of Customs and Excise.

Mr Enderby will also retain his portfolio of Attorney-General.

The amalgamation of federal law enforcement agencies is one of the objectives of the Government which Mr Whitlam announced in his policy speech in November 1972.

This action has been taken after wide ranging discussions with those concerned. It represents a major step in integration of the law enforcement agencies; it will achieve more efficient operations generally and in particular it will enable a concerted effort to be made against white collar or corporate crime. At the same time the creation of the integrated Police service will provide the Australian Government with the opportunity to build into the new system proper and better safeguards for the rights of the individual.

In its operations the Australia Police will have regard for the Government's policy to place emphasis on the prevention of crime and the protection of the rights of citizens.

The Australia Police will operate initially under existing legislation but the drafting of an Australia Police Bill will begin immediately. This will provide for a common framework for the operation of all the components of the Australia Police, for specialised training and for the appointment of an independent tribunal to investigate complaints against the police.

The Bill will also lay down guidelines to members of the service to preserve and reinforce civil rights and liberties. It will provide that there will be no discrimination against any sector of the community and will facilitate public scrutiny of police operations. The Bill will reflect the Government's policy to develop a well trained and educated police service equal to any national police force in the world.

The new Police Service will have increased capacity to deal with areas of federal law under new legislation being developed by the Government. It will involve an increase in responsibility for Commissioners of Police in the A.C.T. and Northern Territory. More effective liaison arrangements will also be developed between the Department of Police and Customs and the law enforcement sections of other Departments.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.