



## PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No.489  
7 April 1975

### INTER-STATE COMMISSION

The Prime Minister, Mr Whitlam, said today that legislation would be introduced in the Australian Parliament soon to re-establish the Inter-State Commission.

Mr Whitlam said the re-establishment of the Inter-State Commission would rectify "a major deficiency in the structure of our Constitutional institutions".

"It is one of the great anomalies of Australia's post-Federation history that the concept of the Inter-State Commission, for which the founders of our Constitution obviously envisaged a major role in Federal relationships, has except for a brief period six decades ago been ignored by Australian Governments.

"After more than two years of careful planning we have now reached a stage where we can decide upon a role and structure for the Commission which we believe will enable it to function in a way consistent with its original conception.

"A clearly developed and defined role for the Commission will evolve over time and in the light of experience."

Mr Whitlam said the Australian Government intended the Commission to play a major role in the transport field in accordance with the intention of the Constitution.

Mr Whitlam said the Inter-State Commission, was first appointed in 1913 following an Act of Parliament introduced by the Fisher Labor Government of 1912. One of the first acts of the Menzies Government in 1950 was to repeal the Act.

The restored Inter-State Commission will consist of a President and four other Members, all full-time. In accordance with Section 103 (ii) of the Constitution, they will be appointed for terms of seven years.

"Although the Commission will not be a judicial body it is considered appropriate that, in view of its important role and its unique Constitutional status and authority, the President should have the same rank, status and precedence as a Justice of the High Court and that other Members should have comparability with Judges of the Australian Industrial Court.

-2-

"It will be apparent from this that we shall be seeking men of the highest calibre to fill positions on the Commission," Mr Whitlam said.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.