



PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No. 504

23 May 1975

GREAT BARRIER REEF PETROLEUM DRILLING ROYAL COMMISSIONS

The Prime Minister, Mr. E.G. Whitlam, Q.C., announced today that the Australian Government had taken decisions on the recommendations of the Report of the Great Barrier Reef Petroleum Drilling Royal Commissions.

The Government agreed with the stand of the Chairman of the Commissions on the principal term of reference (No 3) that no drilling should be permitted in the area of the Reef until such time as reliable scientific information is available on the effects of oil on the Reef and its organisms.

Mr Whitlam said that he would be writing to the Premier of Queensland immediately, seeking the support of the Queensland Government in this decision.

The Commissions were appointed on 5 May 1970 and their Report was presented to the two Governments on 1 November 1974.

The remaining terms of reference were largely subsidiary to No 3 and dealt with the risk of leaks during drilling; the probable effects of leaks; probable benefits of drilling; and appropriate safety precautions.

CANBERRA, A.C.T.