



## PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No. 508  
4 June 1975

### NEWCASTLE WOMEN'S CENTRE

The Australian Government is negotiating the purchase of Lysaght's Recreation Centre in Newcastle for use as a community centre for the women of the Newcastle area.

The Prime Minister said the project had been submitted by the Hunter Region Working Women's Group. It would be funded through grants from the Hospital and Health Services Commission (\$25,000) the interim committee of the Children's Commission (\$42,000) and the International Women's Year Committee (\$41,220). These grants would cover the cost of the building and essential renovations.

The new centre will enable the Hunter Region Working Women's Group to expand its activities on behalf of women living and working in Newcastle and surrounding districts. The area includes many migrant women.

At present the group is using temporary premises in Newcastle to conduct a women's health centre, through a grant from the Hospitals and Health Services Commission. The Attorney-General has agreed to second an officer through the Australian Legal Aid Office to provide legal advice for women using the centre. It is planned to develop more general counselling and information services for women in the work force, so as to involve them more in helping to improve their own working conditions. Since migrant women tend to be exploited in the work situation, it is hoped to appoint multi-lingual staff to the centre who can provide both English classes and special counselling for women unsure of their rights in their jobs and in the community at large.

Special child care facilities will be provided by the centre and an officer appointed to help initiate other childhood services in the Newcastle community. At the same time, recreational programs will cater for a wide variety of known interests, and further research will be undertaken to establish the educational and recreational needs of women in the area.

It is hoped that centres similar to the Newcastle working women's centre will be established throughout Australia.