



PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No.519
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JOINT PRESS STATEMENT ON WAGE FIXATION

The Premiers' Conference discussed future approaches to wage fixation in Australia in the light of the existing high levels of inflation. In a statement issued after the Conference, the Prime Minister and Premiers said that, following the historic National Wage Case decision of April 30 when the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission conditionally accepted the principle of wage indexation, there is a definite opportunity for the recent explosion in wages and prices to be brought under control. The Governments unanimously supported the guidelines handed down in the decision for future wage claims. They said that it was encouraging that the guidelines had received such widespread acceptance and endorsement by other tribunals and by a wide cross section of the Australian community, including the executive of the ACTU and other influential spokesmen from the union movement.

They appealed to all sections of the industrial community to play their part by co-operating to achieve an orderly and just system of wage fixing based on economic realism and industrial sanity. They warned that unless this co-operation is forthcoming Australia faced a situation in which accelerating inflation would reach crippling heights, imperilling our economic future and causing hardship to ever increasing numbers and groups throughout the community.

In this situation the Prime Minister and the Premiers were in common accord on the need to take action to uphold the guidelines set down in the National Wage Case decision. This would include:

- . Working toward a uniform approach in the hearings on indexation before the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in July/August;
- . Support by Governments for the guidelines in appropriate industry cases;
- . Action to ensure compliance with the guidelines in public employment within the control of Governments;
- . A meeting of bodies responsible for wage-fixing in government employment;
- . Appropriate measures so that tribunals, however constituted, act in accordance with the guidelines;

A meeting of Australian and State Ministers for Labor will be convened as soon as possible to discuss action.