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PRIME MINISTER

PRESS STATEMENT NO. 588
6 NOVEMBER 1975

NEW COMMISSIONER FOR THE DARWIN RECONSTRUCTION COMMISSION

The Prime Minister, Mr E.G. Whitlam, today announced the appointment of a new Chairman of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission. He is Mr Clem Jones, who for 14 years was Lord Mayor of the City of Brisbane. He is 57 years of age, married with no children. He is a licenced surveyor and holds a Bachelor of Science degree. He took a post graduate course in Public Administration at the University of California, Los Angeles. The Prime Minister said that the Government was fortunate to obtain the services of a man of Mr Jones' great experience. Brisbane is the only all-purpose local government authority in Australia. It covers approximately 400 square miles, a population of 725,000 and has a budget of approximately \$200 million.

The Prime Minister paid tribute to the excellent job which had been done by the retiring Chairman, Mr Tony Powell, the Commissioner of the National Capital Development Commission in Canberra. At the time of Mr Powell's appointment in March this year he had indicated his willingness to serve for an initial period of 12 months in order to establish the Reconstruction Commission. It was agreed that at the end of the 12 month period the position would be reviewed.

The Prime Minister said Mr Powell had recently suggested that it was now an appropriate time for the Government to reconsider his position on the Reconstruction Commission.

The current situation with regard to the Commission is that all of the senior staff have been appointed, including the General Manager who is the full-time chief executive. The 1975-76 work program is committed and under way. A report on the overall Five Year Reconstruction Program is with the Minister for Northern Australia, Mr Paul Keating.

Mr Powell told the Prime Minister that after its somewhat difficult beginning the Commission was well set to complete the task it had been constituted to carry out.

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Mr Powell also advised the Prime Minister that he had received the utmost courtesy and friendliness from the people he had met and worked with in Darwin, but that there were significant limitations upon his time and availability in trying to cope with full-time duties as Commissioner of the N.C.D.C. in Canberra, and part-time Chairman of the Reconstruction Commission in Darwin.

With the advent of a new Minister in Mr Keating, Mr Powell felt it was time for the Government to consider whether he should stand down as Chairman in favour of someone who would have more time to devote to the job and would be able to identify more closely with the Darwin community.

The Prime Minister said the Government wished to place on record its gratitude to Mr Powell for the way in which he had coped with the difficult period of establishing the Commission. The Government was pleased that the appointment of Mr Clem Jones to the position of Chairman of the Reconstruction Commission would enable Mr Powell to devote his great talents to the important task of planning, construction and development of the national capital.