



*Malcolm Fraser*  
4

## PRIME MINISTER

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### DEPARTMENT OF PRODUCTIVITY

The Prime Minister, Mr Malcolm Fraser, announced today that a new Department of Productivity is to be established. This initiative has been taken in recognition of the need to provide a technologically orientated agency with the responsibility of providing increased industrial productivity. It is the Government's aim to encourage innovation and the exploitation of inventions so that Australian industry might benefit in two ways - firstly by reducing cost structures on the domestic scene and secondly by assisting in our competitive position overseas. It is envisaged that the Ministry will play an active role in the development of Australian production.

The Prime Minister also announced that the Governor-General has agreed to the appointment of Mr Ian Macphie, M.P., as Minister for Productivity when the Department is established; he will also become the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister in Women's Affairs and will be Minister Assisting the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations.

The new Ministry will draw together elements of Commonwealth Government activities directed towards productivity improvement. It will also stimulate and coordinate the activities of other Commonwealth Departments and authorities towards this end.

Mr Fraser commented that, having regard to the central importance of people in the field of productivity improvement, the new Department would take over all those elements of the Government's administration that relate to the working environment - human, organisational, social and physical.

These elements are currently located in the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations - a Department with which the new Department will have strong links. Servicing of the Productivity Promotion Council and the Productivity Groups will also be transferred.

Having regard particularly to the purposes for which the new Ministry is being established, the Minister for Productivity will, in conjunction with the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, have responsibility for developing and advancing national training policies for implementation by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and other Ministers.

In carrying out these responsibilities the Minister for Productivity will in cooperation with other agencies develop an overview of training; identify gaps in services or programmes; and develop approaches to remedy deficiencies. The Minister will, in conjunction with the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations, be the principal source of advice to the Government on national training policy for industry. The Ministry will include the National Training Council.

The Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations will continue to be responsible for the administration of individual training schemes within the framework of approved national policies.

The Patent, Trade Marks and Designs Offices will also be located in the new Ministry. Earlier this year the Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs announced the establishment of a Patent Information Service to assist research, manufacturing and industrial concerns in drawing on the resources of the Patent Office. Mr Fraser said the Government believes that further developments in this field would be best handled within a Ministry of Productivity.

There are, within the Department of Industry and Commerce, a number of functions which are directed towards the development of industrial potential. These include work on industrial efficiency and the development of innovation and invention. These functions will be included in the new department as a basis for future development.

The Australian Industry Research and Development Incentives Board is also to be transferred to the new Ministry.

Currently located within the Industry and Commerce portfolio are a number of factories which are primarily for defence production purposes. The Government believes that the encouragement of innovative techniques can flow from the location of these within a productivity oriented department, and has therefore decided to transfer responsibility for them to the new Ministry.

Also to be included in the new Ministry are the Materials Handling Branch of the Bureau of Transport Economics and the associated Materials Handling Advisory Committee.

While the Government does not intend that the scientific establishments such as the CSIRO and the Defence Science laboratories be included in the Productivity Department, the need for close working relationships with these and other relevant agencies has been recognised and will be put into effect.