

PRIME MINISTER'S INTERVIEW FOLLOWING MEETING WITH PREMIERS
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIAN AND QUEENSLAND, MELBOURNE, 6 November, 1978

PRIME MINISTER. I think it was a very productive discussion, yes. I think the statement quite clearly indicates the differing points of view, but it acknowledges that there needs to be closer consultation between the Commonwealth and the States in relation to these matters. Queensland and Western Australia, and the Commonwealth are particularly concerned to maximise the opportunities available to Australia in terms of investment, resource development. That obviously has consequences for general activity in Australia, for the strength of our balance of payments, and if there are differences between governments it doesn't assist in maximising the advantages and benefits to Australia. So, it is important that we approach the forthcoming discussions at officer level and at Minister level with a view to removing differences where there are differences and making sure that we jointly bend our efforts to working for Australia as a whole.

QUESTION: As a simple point thought, the export controls remain?

PRIME MINISTER: The statement makes it perfectly plain that there will be discussions with the States in relation to it, but pending the review the guidelines are operative, yes.

QUESTION: .. compromise on both sides, Mr Fraser?

PRIME MINISTER: I think that in the spirit in which we approached the matter today there is a recognition of a need to get to a common point of view if that is possible, and I believe that it is possible. I don't want to preempt what will come out of the discussions and the negotiations, but I think that the present Commonwealth Government on a number of issues and not least on the policy in relation to infra-structure borrowing, which was announced earlier this afternoon, has indicated that it believes Australia is going to be better advantaged if the Commonwealth Government and the State Governments are working in harmony for common purposes and, it is certainly going to be our objective to achieve that kind of view and I would be very surprised if it wasn't the States view also.

QUESTION: But you might have to give some ground in achieving that?

PRIME MINISTER: To get to a position on which all people agree implies going into a discussion with not a rigid, intractable and absolute position. If you are going to do that then there is never going to be agreement.

QUESTION: Would it be that you moved too fast in the past?

PRIME MINISTER: There is no need to talk about the past but I think that what does need emphasising in relation to this is that those administrative guidelines were issued as guidelines for discussion, and that was at the time they were issued, for discussion with the States, for discussion with the companies, and if we were going to issue them validly as we were for discussion there was a clear indication that there could be changes - that was the strong implication right from the very outset.