



PRIME MINISTER

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MEETING WITH SIR CHARLES COURT AND MR BJELKE-PETERSEN

The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, and the Premier of Western Australia, Sir Charles Court, and the Premier of Queensland, Mr Joh Bjelke-Petersen, today had useful and productive discussions on mineral export policy. They all agreed that a resolution of differences between the Commonwealth and the States was important to maximise investment and trade opportunities to achieve the maximum advantage for Australia.

Mr Joh Bjelke-Petersen and Sir Charles Court expressed their disagreement with the Commonwealth's 24 October 1978 announcement about export price guidelines and procedure.

The meeting acknowledged the Constitutional position of the Commonwealth Government in respect of export licensing but Queensland and Western Australia expressed fears of unnecessary intervention by the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth expressed the view that in certain marketing situations the negotiating arm of some Australian companies needed strengthening and that was the purpose of export controls.

It was agreed that closer cooperation between the Commonwealth and States is needed in the interests of achieving the maximum benefit from resources development consistent with the National Interest.

With this in view as suggested by the Commonwealth, there will be discussions at Commonwealth/State Minister and officer levels to review the guidelines announced on 24 October 1978 and the method of application to ensure encouragement of trade and investment. As also indicated by the Commonwealth companies will be closely involved in discussions.

The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister repeated that the guidelines were forwarded to the States and the industry as a draft for discussion.

In the meantime, it was agreed that the States and companies would be consulted where necessary about the parameters for current negotiations so that they can proceed quickly under the present guidelines pending completion of the review. The Commonwealth was anxious to avoid a vacuum in negotiations in the immediate future as it was obvious agreement could not be reached at a single meeting.
