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PRIME MINISTER

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Ministerial Changes

The Prime Minister announced today changes in the Ministry flowing from the decision to establish a separate Department of Industrial Relations and a Department of Employment and Youth Affairs. Mr. Street will become Minister for Industrial Relations and Mr. Viner, Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs.

Under Mr. Street as Minister, the activities undertaken by the present Department of Employment and Industrial Relations have been considerably expanded.

There has been a major expansion of employment and training programmes under this Government and a re-organisation and expansion of the Commonwealth Employment Service. The programmes being implemented in this area now include the National Employment and Training System, Special Youth Employment Training Programme, Community Youth Support Scheme, Apprenticeship Support Programmes, Commonwealth Rebate for Apprentice Full-time Training, Relocation Assistance Scheme and the activities of the Trade Union Training Authority.

In all, over 300,000 people have been helped through these schemes since the Government came to office.

In the area of Industrial Relations substantial progress has been made over the last three years in reducing the level of industrial disruption in terms of time lost, number of disputes and workers involved.

In 1974 under the Labor Government there were 6.3 million man days lost due to strikes. Last year, this had fallen to 1.6 million; one quarter of the man days lost just three years earlier.

This owes much to Mr. Street's firm but fair administration and his sensitive handling of his portfolio. The major reforms Mr. Street has made in this area include the establishment of the Industrial Relations Bureau and the National Labour Consultative Council; the introduction of secret postal ballots for union elections; greater protection for conscientious objectors; and the requirement that unions have their accounts audited and report regularly to their membership.

The expansion and importance of these areas make it now necessary that they should fall under separate portfolios, each of which will be under the control of a Cabinet Minister.

Industrial Relations is a matter of great social and economic importance. These changes will introduce a new phase in the Industrial Relations of our nation. The new arrangements will enable Mr. Street to devote greater attention to the avoidance and resolution of industrial disputes before significant damage is caused to the economy and inconvenience to the public. The Government will build on the advances already made in the industrial relations area by ensuring that the Department has greater resources to further encourage and stimulate the processes of communication and consultation at national, industry and enterprise level.

The Department of Industrial Relations will also have a positive role in developing policy advice in relation to the improvement of employer/employee relations across industries, including aspects of the working environment. A unit within the Department will be established to perform this role. In its co-ordinating role, it will work in close liaison with the Working Environment Division in the Department of Productivity.

Mr. Viner will be Minister of Employment and Youth Affairs, an area of high priority for the Government. Mr. Viner will have responsibility for employment and the various training programmes which are at the present time under review.

Mr Viner will be responsible for the Office of Youth Affairs, the establishment which was announced by this Government in February 1977. The Office, whose charter is to coordinate and consult with Commonwealth Departments, States, Local Government and non-Government agencies on Commonwealth Government programmes and proposals affecting youth, will be expanded and strengthened. Mr Viner will continue to be Minister Assisting the Prime Minister.

Senator Chaney will be appointed to become Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, and Mr. McLeay will be appointed Minister for Administrative Services. Senator Chaney will continue to be Minister Assisting the Minister for Education and Mr McLeay will continue to be Minister Assisting the Minister for Defence.

A re-examination of the diverse functions of the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development has led the Government to conclude that greater impetus would be given to the Government's policies by allocating these functions to Departments in which they fit logically and naturally.

Mr Groom will become Minister for Housing and Construction. Responsibility for government policy on sports will be transferred to the Department of Home Affairs. The Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Ellicott, will thus have overall responsibility for government policy on cultural and sporting affairs.

Mr Newman, the Minister for National Development, to complement his existing responsibilities for decentralisation, will assume responsibility for urban planning and local government.

Senator Webster will become Minister for Science and the Environment. This in particular will enable the Government's scientists and advisers on the environment to work more closely together to give effect to the Government's commitment to preserving and enhancing Australia's environment.

As a consequence of the changes I have announced today, the number of Ministers and the number of Departments will remain unchanged. Further details of the changes in Ministerial and Departmental responsibilities and functions are contained in the attached statement.

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CHANGES IN MINISTERIAL AND DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES
AND FUNCTIONS

The following details of changes to be made to administrative arrangements supplement the Prime Minister's announcement.

CREATIONS AND ABOLITIONS

The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations is to be abolished, and the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs, and the Department of Industrial Relations established.

The Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development is to be abolished and its functions reallocated.

The total number of departments will therefore remain at 28.

DEPARTMENTS TO BE RETITLED

The Department of Science will be renamed as the Department of Science and the Environment, and the Department of Construction as the Department of Housing and Construction.

DETAILS OF FUNCTIONS AND BODIES TO BE RE-ALLOCATED

Employment and Youth Affairs

The following functions of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations will be re-allocated to the new Department of Employment and Youth Affairs:

- . manpower and training policy and programmes
- . economic and international aspects of manpower
- . general employment services (Commonwealth Employment Service)
- . vocational guidance
- . youth employment
- . special employment (including handicapped persons, migrants and professionals)

- . Aboriginal employment services
- . apprenticeship and industry training
- . the Women's Bureau.

The new Department will also assume responsibility for youth affairs (from the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development).

Bodies associated with the Department of Employment and Youth Affairs will include:

- . Australian Apprenticeship Advisory Committee
- . CES Advisory Committees
- . National Aboriginal Employment Development Committee
- . National Committee on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation
- . National Training Council.

Industrial Relations

The Department of Industrial Relations will take over the following functions of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations:

- . industry-oriented industrial relations
- . national industrial relations - legislation and machinery
- . national industrial relations policies - wages and working conditions
- . industrial relations information and liaison
- . economic and international aspects of industrial relations
- . Industrial Registries.

The Minister for Industrial Relations will assume responsibility for administration of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, except for those provisions administered by the Attorney-General.

Bodies associated with the new Department will include:

- . Australian Trade Union Training Authority
- . Coal Industry Tribunal
- . Industrial Relations Bureau
- . National Labour Consultative Council
- . Public Service Arbitrator
- . Stevedoring Industry Consultative Council and Finance Committee.

The Department of Industrial Relations will also have a position role in developing policy in relation to the improvement of employer/employee relations across industries, including aspects of the working environment. In its co-ordinating role it will work closely with the Working Environment Division of the Department of Productivity.

Science and the Environment

The functions of the Department of Science will be broadened by the addition of responsibility for environment and conservation matters (from Environment, Housing and Community Development).

Ministerial responsibility for the following bodies will be re-allocated to the Minister for Science and the Environment:

- . Australian Environment Council
- . National Advisory Committee on Chemicals
- . Australian Ionising Radiation Advisory Council
- . Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service
- . Council of Nature Conservation Ministers
- . Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
- . Great Barrier Reef Consultative Committee
- . Office of the Supervising Scientist (with the Alligator Rivers Region Research Institute and Co-ordinating Committee)

Housing and Construction

The functions of the Department of Construction will be broadened to include:

- . building industry (from EHCD)
- . housing, including Home Savings Grants, Commonwealth/State housing, housing policy and research (from EHCD)

Ministerial responsibility for the following bodies will be re-allocated to the Minister for Housing and Construction:

- . Australian Housing Research Council
- . Housing Loans Insurance Corporation
- . Indicative Planning Council for the Housing Industry
- . Non-Residential Building Consultative Committee

National Development

The urban planning and development function and the local government function of the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development will be transferred to the Department of National Development. Ministerial responsibility for the Local Government Ministers' Conference will be re-allocated accordingly.

Home Affairs

Functions relating to leisure, including sport, physical fitness, community development and recreation (currently with the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development) will become the responsibility of the Department of Home Affairs.

Ministerial responsibility for the Recreation Ministers' Council, the Sports Advisory Council, and also the Australian Heritage Commission will be re-allocated to the Minister for Home Affairs.

Administrative Services

On abolition of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations, responsibility for transitory accommodation matters will transfer to the Department of Administrative Services, which already has a major role as the Commonwealth's property management agency. Ministerial responsibility for Commonwealth Accommodation and Catering Services Pty Ltd (formerly Commonwealth Hostels Ltd) will be re-allocated accordingly.

Productivity

The Department of Productivity will assume responsibility for any residual food services research and advising activities currently performed by the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations.