



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

3 DECEMBER 1978

### MEAT INSPECTION INQUIRY

The Prime Minister today announced that he had written to State Premiers and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory seeking their agreement to the establishment of an independent committee to inquire into and report on Commonwealth and State meat inspection arrangements.

The Prime Minister emphasised the necessity of obtaining State Government co-operation to enable the committee to effectively conduct its wide ranging investigations. State Governments are responsible in most States for the inspection of meat for domestic consumption while the Commonwealth has responsibility for export meat.

The Prime Minister recalled that he had written to Premiers on 4 May seeking their co-operation in rationalising the present system of separate Commonwealth and State meat inspection systems.

Premiers generally had replied that improvements could be made to the present arrangements, and had expressed the view that State Government should exercise a greater role.

The Prime Minister said that the Commonwealth had nominated the Hon. C.R. Kelly, a former Minister of State and long time Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, and Mr W.A. Buettel, a former General Manager of the Commonwealth Development Bank, Queensland, serve as members of the inquiry.

The Commonwealth Government proposed that the inquiry have the following terms of reference:

The Committee of Inquiry will be required to investigate and report to the Minister for Primary Industry on:

- (a) the merits and demerits of the meat inspection system as presently operated by State and Federal bodies;
- (b) whether the present system of meat inspection administration should be retained and, if so, with or without modification;
- (c) an alternative system if the present meat inspection administration systems should not be retained;

- (d) the recommended organisational structure and control of an alternative meat inspection system if the present system should not be retained;
- (e) the industrial relations and any other considerations.

These terms of reference are sufficiently wide to allow the Committee to investigate and evaluate the present system of separate meat inspection administration arrangements. They would give the inquiry scope to suggest alternatives to the present arrangements. Its findings should be of great assistance to governments in finding means of rationalising meat inspection services, and reducing costs.

---o0o---