



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7 1979

### PREMIERS' CONFERENCE DISCUSSION

#### ON AUSTRALIA/JAPAN RELATIONS

The Premiers' Conference today discussed Australian relations with Japan in the context of the great and growing importance of Japan to Australia and the extensive involvement of Japan in the economies of the Australian States.

The meeting recalled that the Ad Hoc Working Group on Australia/Japan Relations (the Myer Committee), which reported to the Commonwealth Government in September 1977, had emphasised the positive contribution which Australia's federal structure can make in enhancing the relationship with Japan. The Report noted the desirability of seeking to achieve a suitable co-ordination of broad national aims with specific State expertise.

In announcing the Commonwealth Government's acceptance of this Report on 30 May 1978, the Prime Minister undertook to meet Premiers to clarify areas of responsibility and explore better means of improving co-ordination.

In discussions today, the Premiers' Conference agreed that there was a clear and growing need for consultations between the Commonwealth and the States on the various aspects of the relationship. To meet this need, it was agreed that there should be consultations at least annually on relations with Japan.

These consultations would focus on the broad political and economic relationship, and would in no way cut across existing Commonwealth/State consultative machinery.

The Premiers' Conference concluded that these agreed measures demonstrated a shared concern to see relations with Australia's largest trading partner maintained and strengthened.