



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

MONDAY, 19 MAY, 1980

HOBART TO BE HEADQUARTERS OF ANTARCTIC COMMISSION

Hobart has been selected as the site for the permanent headquarters of the international Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. Hobart's nomination was agreed to in principle by delegates from fifteen nations meeting in Canberra yesterday at a Conference to finalise an international Convention governing the conservation and management of marine living resources in the Antarctic region.

Final details of the Convention have now been agreed and delegates are expected to meet for the last time tomorrow to give formal endorsement of its provisions, including Hobart's selection for the Commission headquarters.

The decision by delegates follows strong support given to Hobart's nomination by the Commonwealth Government over a long period. This has involved extensive diplomatic contacts prior to the Conference, as well as direct discussions with Conference delegates during their meeting in Canberra. In addition, the Commonwealth Government had made a RAAF (VIP) aircraft available during the conference for a visit to Hobart by Delegation Heads to inspect facilities, and had jointly hosted functions for the delegates in co-operation with the Tasmanian Government.

The success of the Commonwealth's approach on behalf of Hobart is a further development in the Government's continuing program to establish Tasmania as an internationally recognised centre of study and research in marine and Antarctic matters. Previous initiatives in this respect by the Commonwealth Government have included establishment of the Australian Maritime College in Launceston, transfer to Hobart of the Antarctic Division of the Department of Science and the Environment, and most recently, the Government's decision to establish a Marine Science Centre in Hobart including the transfer of the CSIRO division of Fisheries and Oceanography.

By bringing together these research and related activities, Tasmania will become the hub of Australia's Antarctic endeavours, and an important centre for marine science and research for all Australia.

Tasmania is going to play an increasingly important role in advancing Australia's knowledge of, and capacity to develop, the resources of the sea.

Major facilities are being established here; facilities that will place Tasmania, and therefore, Australia, at the forefront of marine science and technology.

This latest decision by delegates from countries including those with highly developed capacities for Antarctic research and commercial activity, is an important sign of international recognition for Australia's, and particularly Tasmania's standing in these fields, developed largely as a result of the Commonwealth's initiatives.

The Commonwealth has agreed to join with the Tasmanian Government in sharing the cost of establishing the new headquarters, and will shortly be commencing discussions on these arrangements and on the most suitable location for the Commission.

I pay tribute to the determined efforts of Federal Government Members and Senators from Tasmania, whose continuing interest in this matter over several years has played a large part in achieving this pleasing result.