



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE IN AUSTRALIA

Following widespread public debate about the merits of technological change, and concern at possible adverse consequences, the Government announced on 1 December, 1978 that it was establishing a Committee of Inquiry into Technological Change in Australia.

The Committee has now completed its work and I am pleased to be able to release its Report today for public discussion and comment.

The Committee emphasises that it is essential for Australian industry - primary, secondary and tertiary - to keep up with technological developments if it is to compete internationally and if we as Australians are to realise the full potential of our economy.

The Government strongly endorses that central conclusion of the Committee.

A special Committee of Cabinet has been established to consider the Committee's recommendations, and the assessment that underlies them, as a matter of high priority.

I am confident that this consideration will lead to substantial acceptance of the Committee's recommendations.

The Government also expects a constructive response to the Report from the community generally.

The Government welcomes the excellent Report which this representative Committee has produced. It believes that this Report will greatly assist the community and the Government in understanding and dealing with technological change.

The most important task set for the Committee was to report and make recommendations to the Government on the process of technological change in Australian industry in order that the Australian community should maximise the economic, social and other benefits and minimise any possible adverse consequences.

In presenting its assessment of the economic, social and other effects of technological change the Committee stresses the strong links between change, economic growth and improved living standards. In doing so it points out that the process of adjustment to change will not necessarily be calm or easy. Many of its recommendations, therefore, are aimed at ensuring that the benefits of change are maximised and adverse effects minimised.

The Committee points out that if the community is to obtain the greatest benefits from new technologies, a more co-operative and mutually supportive approach than has generally prevailed in Australia in the past will be needed. The future introduction of new technology without undue and potentially costly industrial resistance, is likely to depend importantly on labour force and community understanding and acceptance, which will in part depend on how those affected by technological change are treated, and how they see themselves and are seen by others as being treated.

The Government strongly supports the general objectives of fostering a more consultative and facilitative approach, as well as a wider understanding and acceptance of technological change.

I will be announcing the Government's considered response to the recommendations early in the Budget Session of Parliament.

The Committee was chaired by Professor Rupert H. Myers, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of New South Wales. Other members were Mr. A.G. Coogan, now Chairman of Nabalco Pty. Ltd. and Mr. W.C. Mansfield, Federal Secretary of the Australian Telecommunications Employees' Association.

The Government is deeply grateful to the members of the Committee and its secretariat, and to the many others, organisations and individuals who assisted it in its work.