



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

FRIDAY, 27 AUGUST 1982

The attached letter has been sent today to the Premier of Victoria, Mr Cain.

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PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

27 August 1982

My dear Premier

Interim Report No.4 of the Royal Commission on the activities of the Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union again brings starkly to public notice the extent of criminal activities, particularly in Victoria, of members of that Union.

I mention briefly some of what Mr Costigan has had to say on this occasion:

"...in Victoria the Union is under the control of hardened criminals". (Paragraph 7.02)

"...there has been...some 15 murders that took place between 1970 and 1979. The two worst years were 1971, when three murders took place and 1979 when four took place". (Paragraph 5.06)

"Their answer to any interference with their activities is not to use the processes of the law but rather threats, violence and intimidation". (Paragraph 4.14)

I am concerned, as I am sure all other Australians are, that the criminal justice system does not seem to have been able to stamp out the notorious criminal activities of members of the Union.

In its response to Interim Report No.4, the Commonwealth has announced its intention to appoint a Special Prosecutor, assisted by a task force, to pursue prosecution of persons involved in the promotion and execution of "bottom of the harbour" tax fraud schemes. The Commonwealth Attorney-General also advised the acting Victorian Attorney-General on 24 August that the Commonwealth agrees that the task force be established jointly with your State.

Mr Costigan has proposed there be a special group to pursue prosecution to suppress the criminal activities he has brought to notice. The Commonwealth stands ready to participate in such a group. The Attorney-General has announced his intention to discuss the matter with Mr Costigan and with your Government.

The public apprehension that has been displayed following

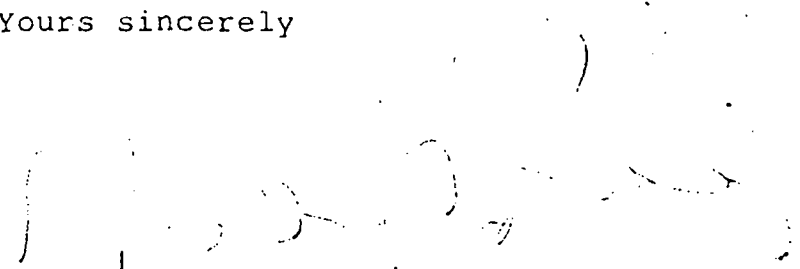
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release of Volume 1 of Interim Report No.4 has clearly demonstrated the need for decisive action against the violence and illegal activities of the painters and dockers. As their crimes of violence clearly fall within State jurisdiction, I raise with you whether or not your Government might wish to initiate similar action in Victoria to that which the Commonwealth has taken in relation to tax fraud schemes.

If your Government did decide that such action is called for but found difficulties in assembling the necessary resources, the Commonwealth would be prepared to give sympathetic consideration to any request for assistance.

I should appreciate advice as to the Victorian Government's thinking on this matter.

Yours sincerely



(Malcolm Fraser)

The Hon John Cain, MLA
Premier of Victoria
MELBOURNE VIC 3000