



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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The Heads of the Public Service of five countries will meet in Canberra this week to discuss the reforms that are transforming the public sector in Westminster type democracies.

Public Service chiefs from the United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland and New Zealand will meet with the Australian Public Service Board to discuss modernisation of their Governments' administrations.

As the Public Service in parliamentary democracies has grown in size and complexity it has become clear that radical reform is needed.

Measures to increase ministerial control and to improve management practices and ensure effectiveness and equity in service delivery are being considered or implemented everywhere.

The reforms currently being undertaken in Australia probably put us ahead of the field at this stage.

The fact that Australia is hosting the Conference and that it has attracted such high level delegates is an indication of the interest being shown elsewhere in the world in changes being made in Australia.

Two of the four delegations from overseas will be led by women.

They are Mrs Huguette Labelle, Chairman of the Canadian Public Service Commission and Ms Anne Mueller, Second Permanent Secretary of the British Management and Personnel Office.

The other two delegations will be led by Mr Kevin Murphy, Secretary to the Irish Department of the Public Service and Dr Mervyn Probine, Chairman of the New Zealand State Services Commission.

Among the issues to be discussed will be the responsiveness of the Public Service to political control, the appointment and training of senior public servants, affirmative action for women and disadvantaged groups, changes in administrative law and industrial democracy.

The conference will commence on Monday November 18 and conclude on Thursday November 21.

While the Government has already done a lot to improve public responsiveness and performance we are hoping this conference will be a source of new ideas and new approaches.

It is very definitely a working conference aimed at practical results.