



## PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

1 SEPTEMBER 1987

The Government will recommend the appointment of the Honourable Mr Justice James Henry Muirhead as Royal Commissioner to head the joint Commonwealth, State and Northern Territory Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.

All States and the Northern Territory have given their support to the Royal Commission and to Mr Justice Muirhead's appointment as Commissioner. The Government is pleased that he is available to conduct this inquiry into a matter which is of major concern to the Aboriginal community and to all Australians.

Mr Justice Muirhead is presently an acting Judge of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory. He served in the AIF from 1943 to 1946 and, following completion of his Bachelor of Laws at the University of Adelaide, was admitted to the Bar in 1950. He was appointed a Queen's Counsel in 1967. He then served on the South Australian Local and District Criminal Court and the Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea and acted as Director of the Australian Institute of Criminology. In 1974 he became a Justice of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory and has acted as Chief Justice. He has also been a Judge of the Federal Court and an Additional Judge of the Supreme Court of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

The Commission is required to present its report by 30 June 1988.

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