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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

6 October 1987

I have decided to recommend to the Administrator that he appoint Professor Ray Martin to the position of Chairman of the Australian Science and Technology Council (ASTEC) for a three Year term commencing January 1988.

Professor Martin, who is 61, succeeds Professor Ralph Slatyer whose term ends in December. He has had a distinguished career as a research chemist in both academic and industry spheres, and as an academic administrator. Professor Martin was educated at the University of Melbourne and Cambridge University, lectured at the University of New South Wales, led a research team at ICI, was Professor of Inorganic Chemistry first at the University of Melbourne and then at the Australian National University. In 1977, he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Monash University, a position he held with distinction until his term concluded early this year.

Professor Martin comes to ASTEC at a time of considerable change in the structure of Government science and technology in Australia and I have complete confidence that he will give the leadership needed to ensure that ASTEC provides the best advice to me and my Government on science and technology matters.

ASTEC'S role in providing an overview on science and technology matters throughout Government administration - and advising where co-ordination is necessary - will be particularly important in the period ahead. So also will its contribution to strategic thinking on the role of science and technology in the economic and social development of Australia.

Under Professor Slatyer's leadership, ASTEC has emphasised the importance of science and technology in increasing innovation and competitiveness of Australian manufacturing industry and in stimulating increased exports of medium and high technology products. A major stimulus to industrial research and development has been the introduction of the 150 percent tax incentive following ASTEC recommendations.

Significant achievements of Professor Slatyer's five year period as Chairman of ASTEC have been the report on Australia's role in the nuclear fuel cycle which charted the course for Government policy on uranium mining and safeguards, and the series of major reports on the quality and relevance of Government funding of R&D. These have led to a substantial restructuring of CSIRO and of higher education research funding with the recent establishment of the Australian Research Council. I wish to thank Professor Slatyer for his contribution to Australian science and technology and wish him well in his return to a full-time academic career.

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