



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

8 JULY 1988

In July last I announced that the program of efficiency scrutinies conducted under the guidance of Mr David Block had been completed, and that the efficiency scrutiny activity would be a matter for departments to pursue against the backdrop of the efficiency dividend required by the Government.

At the same time, I announced that Mr Block would assist the Government in a number of specific areas of administrative review over the course of the ensuing months, supported by a small group within my Department.

Those further reviews have now been largely completed, and accordingly I have decided, with Mr Block's full concurrence, that the Administrative Reform Unit within my Department should be wound up.

The Government is most grateful to Mr Block for his assiduous and productive work both in relation to efficiency scrutinies and the broader reviews just referred to.

Most of the recommendations arising from both these activities have been accepted by the Government.

Perhaps even more important, Mr Block has managed to promote an environment of reform and questioning of established practices within the Commonwealth administration which will have ongoing benefit for many years. I am confident that the impetus for change provided by Mr Block, with the support of the Unit, will now be carried forward by individual managers.

Arising from the most recent review activity involving Mr Block, the Government has decided:-

To locate Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) and Department of Social Security (DSS) Offices in the one building wherever possible, providing some small savings but more importantly major benefits to those members of the public dealing with both agencies. Other Commonwealth service-delivery agencies have been directed to examine also the possibility of co-location with the CES and DSS offices. In addition, free direct-line telephones will be provided from CES offices to the nearest DSS office in towns where there is no full-time DSS presence. Unemployment beneficiaries who currently lodge their fortnightly Continuation Forms by post will be able to lodge the forms at CSS offices.

- . To transfer to the Department of Social Security the administration of living allowances paid under the Adult Migrant Education Program and those paid to migrants undertaking English as a Second Language courses at TAFE institutions. These payments are currently made by the Departments of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, and Employment Education and Training respectively. This decision will provide major public benefits through access to these programs via the network of Social Security offices instead of the present centralised capital city locations.
- . To restructure the NCDC, the decision on which was announced yesterday.

The Government is indebted to Mr Block for the major contribution he has made both through the efficiency scrutiny program and through the broader reviews to which I have just referred. I am therefore pleased to say that, while the Administrative Reform Unit will now be disbanded, Mr Block himself will continue to be available to advise me on an ad hoc basis on public sector management and administrative reform issues.