

6



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

11 JULY 1988

On the advice of the Australian Science and Technology Council (ASTE^C) I am today announcing the amalgamation of ASTE^C with its standing committee, the Technological Change Committee (TCC). This integration will ensure that not only the benefits of new technology, but also its effects on those immediately concerned and on the wider Australian community, will be fundamental elements for consideration by ASTE^C in all aspects of its work program.

Established at the Government's request in 1980, the TCC has been responsible for maintaining a continuing review of processes and trends in technological change and evaluating and reporting on their social and economic effects. While located with ASTE^C it has operated with its own secretariat and work program.

In recent years there has been growing recognition of the need to achieve a balance between the advice provided by ASTE^C, which has generally promoted the use of new technology where it can be shown to offer economic advantages, and that of the TCC, which has been more concerned with the social consequences of technological change. It is important that a balance in these perspectives be reflected when views and recommendations are presented to the Government. The Council and TCC members have agreed that this can best be done by combining the functions and responsibilities of the two bodies. An added benefit of such a move will be a streamlining of procedures for the preparation and approval of reports.

In future people with credentials in technology assessment, either those who have served on the TCC or others who have gained such experience elsewhere will be appointed to the Council. ASTE^C membership will encompass the expertise required to ensure full consideration of the societal impacts of new technologies in all its undertakings.