



# PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

2 MARCH 1989

**JOINT STATEMENT WITH THE MINISTER FOR SCIENCE, CUSTOMS AND SMALL BUSINESS, THE HON BARRY JONES**

The Government yesterday considered a submission on Australia's science and technology capacity from Barry Jones, the Minister for Science, Customs and Small Business.

The Government fully agreed to the Minister's proposals to develop a major Government statement on science and technology policy. This will be done as a matter of priority.

The Government supported the broad thrust of the submission and agreed that Australia had to improve its scientific capacity greatly. The Government fully appreciates the vital role science must play in laying the foundation for Australia's future prosperity.

In developing this statement the Government felt that input from the range of portfolios having major interests in science would be needed to reflect the full extent of Government involvement in scientific activity. In particular work currently underway on various initiatives in the Education, Employment and Training and the Primary Industry and Energy portfolios would need to be closely integrated into the development of the statement.

Overall responsibility for co-ordinating the statement would rest with Barry Jones while John Dawkins' would be involved with research in tertiary institutions.

The Government decided that, although a substantial response was best made in the context of the statement, significant progress could be made in three areas.

Firstly, the Government has accepted the principle that CSIRO, ANSTO and AIMS should be permitted to retain all external earnings. Accordingly CSIRO's budget is to be increased by \$2.1m, \$6.6m, and \$11.6m respectively in 1988-89, 1989-90 and 1990-91.

Secondly, the Government will provide \$8.4m in 1988-89 to upgrade equipment in Government research facilities. Mr Jones is releasing a separate statement on the equipment involved.

Thirdly, the Government will establish a Science Co-ordinating Committee and appoint a Chief Science Advisor to chair it. The Advisor will report directly to Mr Jones. The Co-ordinating Committee will give particular attention to science issues extending beyond the responsibility of any one Government portfolio.