



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

27 November 1989

The Government has finalised the terms of reference for the Resource Assessment Commission's inquiry into forests and timber resources. I have written to the Hon Justice D G Stewart, Chairperson of the Commission, formally asking him to commence the inquiry. A copy of my notice to the Commission setting out the terms of reference for the inquiry is attached.

The Resource Assessment Commission was established by the Commonwealth Government this year to conduct independent inquiries into major complex resource issues. The Government's intention to refer the issue of Australia's forest resources to the Commission as its first topic of inquiry was announced by the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, Mr Kerin, in May this year when he introduced the Resource Assessment Commission legislation into Parliament.

I have consulted with State and Territory governments and other interested parties on the terms of reference for the inquiry. I am satisfied that the terms of reference and the requirements contained in the Act will enable the Commission to consider all aspects of forest resource use and management that it considers relevant. In the Act, use in relation to a resource includes use for conservation, and the Commission is required to assess the environmental, cultural, social, industry, economic and other implications of all possible uses of the resource, including long-term, uncertain and intangible implications.

The Governor-General has appointed Dr David James and Dr Graeme Caughley as special Commissioners to the Resource Assessment Commission for the purpose of this inquiry.

Dr James is an economist with considerable experience in the field of resource economics. He was formerly Associate Professor of Economics at Macquarie University.

Dr Caughley is Chief Research Scientist with the CSIRO's Division of Wildlife and Ecology and has extensive international experience in the field of applied ecology.

Because of the complexity and importance of this issue I have specified a period of two years for the Commission to complete its investigations.

**RESOURCE ASSESSMENT COMMISSION: INQUIRY INTO
AUSTRALIA'S FOREST AND TIMBER RESOURCES**

The Resource Assessment Commission is an independent, statutory body recently established by the Commonwealth Government to conduct inquiries into major, complex resource issues.

I have issued the following notice to the Commission in accordance with s.16 of the *Resource Assessment Commission Act 1989*.

Commonwealth of Australia

**Notice of Referral of a Resource Matter under s.16 of the
*Resource Assessment Commission Act 1989***

For the purpose of decisions that the Commonwealth Government may make in the exercise of its powers,

I require the Resource Assessment Commission to conduct an inquiry into options for the use of Australia's forest and timber resources.

The scope of the inquiry shall be to identify and evaluate options for the use of those resources.

The report of the inquiry is to be given to me by 30 November 1991.

The Commission shall take into account both the existing management strategies and alternative uses for forestry resources, including the Forestry and Forest Products Industry Council (FAFPIC) Growth Plan and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) Alternative Strategy.

R J L Hawke
Prime Minister

Further information about the Commission's inquiry into forest and timber resources is available from the Secretary, Resource Assessment Commission, Locked Bag 1, Queen Victoria Terrace, CANBERRA ACT 2600.