



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

16 MARCH 1990

In view of the misleading statements made by the Coalition after my Campaign Launch on 8 March 1990 I wish to make completely clear the funding basis for the new Co-operative Research Centres.

This follows a letter to me from Professor Wicken, the President of the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies, expressing concern that this excellent initiative had been misrepresented by the Opposition, causing some confusion in the scientific community. A copy of Professor Wicken's letter is attached.

I reiterate that:

- . The scheme will be introduced immediately upon our re-election and it is planned that the first 15 Centres will be established within the next 12 months.
- . The Centres will be created by linking together outstanding research groups and providing additional resources. Facilities will be concentrated at the one location where possible. Where geographical co-location is not possible research consortia and networks could be established.
- . The existing resources of staff, facilities and equipment will constitute the contribution of participating institutions. That combined contribution will be matched by new funds from the scheme. The participating institutions will not have to make their contribution in cash or by cutting back on existing activities.
- . The supplementary funds provided under the scheme will be flexible and may be used for staff salaries, buildings, equipment or research support.
- . The total funds provided by the Government when all 50 Centres are established will be \$100 million per year.
- . These funds are additional to existing funding arrangements and do not involve any offsetting savings from our appropriations to science or education.

I repeat that the establishment of the Centres will be the most significant step ever taken by a Commonwealth government to build on and draw together the strengths of Australian researchers.

I am delighted by the enthusiastic response that the proposal has received from the science and technology community.

**FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN SCIENTIFIC
AND TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETIES INC**

Office of

**The President
G.P.O. Box 2181
CANBERRA A.C.T. 2601****Tel: (062) 473554
Fax: (062) 496419
Sydney (02) 662 2918****16 March 1990****The Hon R.J. Hawke
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600****FAX 062 734100****Dear Prime Minister,**

As you will be aware FASTS, along with other scientific groups, has warmly supported your initiatives towards the establishment of Co-operative Research Centres by CSIRO, universities and the private sector. I am sure you will be equally aware that the Coalition's spokesperson for Science, Peter McGauran, has attacked the proposition on the basis that it would take funds from the universities and CSIRO. The Minister for Science, Barry Jones, did, last week, attempt some damage control, but I am finding that Mr. McGauran's press statements have created some confusion and cynicism in the scientific community. I believe that the issue is of such significance that a statement from you before the election would be necessary to allay the fears that I have described. FASTS would hate to see this excellent initiative founder through yet another variation of "where's the money coming from".

I have also communicated these concerns to the Chief Scientist, Professor Ralph Slatyer.

Yours sincerely


**(Professor) A.J. WICKEN
PRESIDENT****Federation of Australian Scientific
and Technological Societies.**