



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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JOINT HEADS OF GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

Former New South Wales Premier and current CSIRO Chairman, Neville Wran, is to lead nationwide seminars on proposals to create a truly national market in Australia. The proposals were agreed to at the recent Special Premiers' Conference held in Sydney on 30 July.

At the conference, the Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers agreed in principle that the Australian States and Territories would mutually recognise each other's product and occupational standards from 1 January 1993.

This will help remove obstacles to interstate trade and the mobility of labour posed by differences in standards and regulations from one State or Territory to another and will enhance the international competitiveness of the Australian economy.

The Prime Minister, Premiers and Chief Ministers announced Mr Wran's appointment today.

Mr Wran has agreed to address seminars in each State and Territory during September on the proposed models for implementing mutual recognition. The seminars are part of an extensive public consultation process to be carried out on behalf of Heads of Government. The seminar dates are to be advised shortly.

Mutual recognition is a major advance in microeconomic reform and is expected to have important benefits for both Australian consumers and industry.

In essence, mutual recognition means that goods which may be sold legally in the State or Territory where they were produced may be sold in any other State or Territory. Similarly with occupations, a person who is registered to practise his or her profession in one State or Territory would be entitled to automatic registration in any other State or Territory.

The Heads of Government in principle agreement on mutual recognition reflects the fact that the standards in one State or Territory meet community expectation and ought to be generally applicable throughout Australia. Uniform standards and minimum essential requirements will complement mutual recognition where these are considered essential.

At the July Conference, Heads of Government noted that there are certain products which may need to be exempted from mutual recognition because a national market in those products would not be desirable. Such products may include firearms, fireworks, gaming and pornographic material.

They also noted that Ministers have been working to develop national competency standards for occupations to help resolve differences in registration and licensing requirements between States and Territories. They agreed that such standards should be developed for all registered occupations and professions by the end of 1992.

The models for implementing mutual recognition which were approved in principle by Heads of Government are set out in detail in a Discussion Paper on the Mutual Recognition of Standards and Regulations in Australia. The Discussion Paper was released for public comment following the July Conference.

Heads of Government have agreed to allow an extension of one month on the due date for responses to the Discussion Paper. Submissions should now be forwarded to the Chairman of the Committee on Regulatory Reform no later than 8 October 1991.

Further copies of the Discussion Paper and details of the forthcoming seminars are available from The Commonwealth-State Relations Secretariat in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (tel 06 271 5296; fax 06 271 5540).