



(1)

PRIME MINISTER

106/93

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON. P.J. KEATING

PRIME MINISTER'S RURAL AND REGIONAL TASK FORCE

I am pleased to announce today the formation of a new Prime Minister's Rural and Regional Task Force to help the Federal Government better meet the needs of Australians living outside the capital cities.

The task force is based largely on the successful former Country Task Force but its role has been broadened and will be co-ordinated with other Government activities already underway, especially those associated with regional development.

The key aims of the Task Force will be:

1. To inform rural Australians of relevant Government programs.
2. To assess the suitability of Government programs which assist rural Australians.
3. To report on the effectiveness and efficiency of those programs.
4. To advise the Prime Minister of any impediments to improving the performance of rural industries and, in particular, rural export performance.

The decision to establish the Task Force was made yesterday at a meeting between myself and the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, Mr Crean, the Task Force chairman, Mr Harry Woods, Secretary Bob Horne, and Senator Sue West.

Like the Country Task Force the new body will deal with all rural and socio-economic issues, including small business, the delivery of services, issues affecting women, care for the elderly, employment and primary production. Its work will be directed as much to people living in provincial towns and cities as to the farm sector.

The Task Force will make regular visits to rural and regional Australia to meet with a wide range of community groups and other representatives and will report directly to me.

Mr Woods can be contacted on (006) 42 6356.
Mr Dick Adams (Deputy Chairperson) on (003) 31 2033
Mr Bob Horne (Secretary) on (049) 34 5656

CANBERRA
October 1, 1993