



PRIME MINISTER

**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING, MP
COAG AND A NEW COMMITMENT TO CHANGE**

On the eve of the COAG Conference in Hobart I take the opportunity to repeat the Government's call for a new commitment to change. A new consensus about change.

The Commonwealth Government does not believe that its role in economic reform is over by any means. Although the role has changed there remains much to do - as the forthcoming White Paper will confirm. However, what Australia urgently requires is a willingness on the part of business and the States to accept their share of responsibility for economic reform in the decade ahead.

As I said on Tuesday night, the truth is that reform in electricity or in competition rules will only succeed if the States accept that it is in their own interests and the interests of their citizens. And that it most certainly is. Similarly, progress in enterprise bargaining or bringing Australian industry to global best practice is in the interests of business and business has the ultimate responsibility for achieving it.

If we are going to maintain the progress of economic reform, strengthen economic recovery and extend its benefits to all Australians, the States and the Commonwealth must develop efficient means of working together and in a more complementary way.

If we are going to deal the people into the opportunities which national recovery offers the States have a fundamental role to play.

We have spent a decade knocking down the barriers to our external competitiveness and creating a cooperative and productive workplace culture. We have to bring the same resolve and the same attitudes to the Federation.

The pursuit of competitive standards of efficiency which the Commonwealth Government has fostered and to which so many Australian businesses have responded must be brought to the Federation.

The principles of efficient management and efficient delivery which have come to govern Australia's best businesses should govern the business of Australia.

The Commonwealth wants to discuss the roles and responsibilities of governments in the Federation - how to deliver programs more effectively.

But a commitment to common national goals must be the guiding principle of the relationship between the States and Commonwealth.

HOBART
24 February 1994