



PRIME MINISTER

33/94

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

APEC BUSINESS FORUM : AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATIVES

At our meeting last year in Seattle, APEC leaders agreed to establish an APEC Business Forum to "identify issues APEC should address to facilitate regional trade and investment and encourage the future development of business networks throughout the region".

The APEC Business Forum will bring together one representative of large business and one of small to medium enterprise from each APEC member economy and will report to the 1994 APEC leaders' meeting in Indonesia. It will play a vital role in providing leaders with a business view of constraints to the further development of trade and investment in the region and ways in which APEC can assist in overcoming them. It will also consider ways of involving business much more closely in APEC's work.

I am pleased to announce that Australia's representatives on the Forum will be Mr Philip Brass, Managing Director of Pacific Dunlop, and Mrs Imelda Roche, Managing Director of Nutri-Metics International. Both Philip Brass and Imelda Roche have extensive business experience in the Asia-Pacific region as well as in Australia and I believe they will make a strong contribution to the Forum's work.

Pacific Dunlop is one of Australia's largest international companies and has an increasing proportion of its operations in the Asia-Pacific region. As the Australian representative at the APEC Business Roundtable meeting in Seattle last year, Philip Brass has already made a significant contribution to dialogue between business in APEC's member economies. He was also a member of my APEC Business Consultative Panel which gave me valuable assistance during my preparations for the Seattle meeting. Philip Brass was BRW Australian Businessman of the Year in 1984.

Under the joint leadership of Imelda Roche and her husband, Bill Roche, Nutri-Metics International initially expanded throughout the Pacific region to New Zealand, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and Thailand and more recently to Hong Kong and China.

Mrs Roche led the recruitment and development of the Nutri-Metics Asia-Pacific sales force and was awarded the Australian Pursuit of Excellence Award in 1986 for her role in the direct selling industry. She was named Australian businesswoman of the year in 1991. In 1993 Imelda Roche was appointed chairman of the World Federation of Direct Selling Associations and Nutrimetics was named BRW retailer of the year. I attach a high priority to strengthening APEC's policy dialogue on small and medium-sized businesses and am looking forward to working with Mrs Roche on this.

The APEC Business Forum is expected to meet twice before November 1994. A date has not yet been set for the first meeting.

CANBERRA

April 21, 1994