



PRIME MINISTER

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

REPORT ON *ONGOING REFORM IN THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SERVICE*

I am very pleased to welcome the Report of the Australian Public Service Management Advisory Board (MAB) on 'Ongoing Reform in the Australian Public Service', tabled in Parliament today (Thursday).

The Report is the first of its kind by MAB - a body which advises the Government, through the Prime Minister, on significant issues in the management of the Australian Public Service.

The Report highlights, in particular, the role of the public service in advancing Government initiatives in the past 12-18 months, including the development and preparation of the Discussion Paper, *Restoring Full Employment*, and the Government's White Paper, *Working Nation*, the implementation of the Government's decision to re-focus industry policy through the establishment of AusIndustry, and the development of measures in health policy to improve the responsiveness of the private health insurance sector.

I am especially pleased that the Report notes improved levels of service to clients by the public service, as seen for example, in recent refinements to the Department of Social Security's claims processing and the Australian Taxation Office's new Electronic Lodgement Service for taxation returns.

The Report concludes that, while the APS has made good progress in focussing on results - arising mainly from public sector reforms over the past decade - there remains scope for further development in some areas.

Among the main challenges ahead are the promotion of public service values, particularly the importance of ethical conduct, the continuing evolution of a more flexible public management framework, and adaptation to social, technological and demographic change.

I would like to thank the members of the Management Advisory Board for their Report. It demonstrates that the Australian Public Service is an institution which has an important and valuable role in serving the interests of all Australians.

CANBERRA

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