



2000

(15)

# **PRIME MINISTER**

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

### **LAND MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE.**

I am pleased to announce that the Federal Government will establish a Land Management Taskforce to investigate ways to improve the adoption and use of property management plans by the farm sector.

The impact of the severe drought in large areas of Queensland and northern NSW has highlighted the need for improved property management practices.

The drought has also highlighted the need for all levels of government, and other sectors such as the banks, to tailor their programs and services to enhance sustainable production and resource protection in the rural sector.

The application of an effective property management plan is the best way to prepare for, and deal with, drought and to manage our land and water resources over the longer term.

But a majority of farm businesses continue to operate without integrated management tools. A 1992-93 ABARE survey of land management practices found that approximately 80 per cent of broadacre farmers and 90 per cent of dairy farmers did not possess a farm plan with information on soil and land capacity.

The Commonwealth considers the increased use of property planning would achieve greater integration of economic and ecological and regional decision making by the farm sector.

The Commonwealth also considers there is scope for increased use of property management planning by the banking sector in determining risk and viability of farm businesses.

The taskforce will be asked to develop a strategy to encourage the use of appropriate property management planning in the farm sector.

It will also investigate means through which public and private sector organisations servicing this sector can ensure their programs and services enhance the development and application of farm management plans.

The membership of the taskforce will be drawn from the farm and financial sectors, government and experts with landcare experience.

The taskforce will report to me by 30 May 1995.

The Taskforce will:

1. Examine the extent of property management planning and implementation and identify options for improving adoption
2. Investigate the scope of property management planning to advance sustainable production in Australian farming
3. Identify means by which property management planning can assist in the development of farm business strategies and operations
4. Examine the scope for increased linkages between property management planning and catchment based or regional plans
5. Review the relationship between property management planning and the provision of government programs and advise on options for further integration where appropriate
6. Examine the scope for financial institutions to incorporate property management planning in assessments of long term farm viability and lending policies.

The taskforce will be assisted by a small secretariat based in the Department of Primary Industries and Energy.

**CANBERRA**  
**24 November 1994**