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PRIME MINISTER

*****Embargoed until 8pm*****

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

21/10/96

I announce tonight the establishment of an Employment Committee of Cabinet.

During the election campaign, I promised to accelerate the rate of real job creation through improved economic management, measures to encourage small business, increase national savings and investment, structural reform and other measures. We are committed to bringing together all the strands of public policy that bear on employment and unemployment in an integrated whole of government strategy.

The broad mandate of the Employment Committee is to promote policies which will maximise the rate of Australia's sustainable economic growth, create new employment opportunities and reduce the level of unemployment that we inherited from the previous government.

It is clear that Labor's approach to economic growth and job creation failed many Australians. The unemployment rate jumped under Labor and remains too high. My government is committed to reversing that trend in a sustainable and lasting fashion.

The Employment Committee is to be given responsibility for overseeing and co-ordinating policies in the areas of employment and unemployment, the labour market (including labour market assistance), deregulation and microeconomic reform, industry and small business, development issues (including major project facilitation), industrial relations, disincentives to work, education and training strategies, and the link between trade and domestic economy.

The Government recognises that there is no short-term fix for Australia's unemployment problem. We are committed to accelerating microeconomic reform to lift Australia's growth potential and provide new jobs. This needs to be complemented by active labour market policies and programmes to reintegrate the unemployed into the jobs market.

The establishment of the Employment Committee provides a permanent and continuing forum for the development and implementation of employment policies and programmes.

The Committee will comprise the Prime Minister (Chairman), Mr Fischer, Mr Costello, Mr Reith, Mr Moore, Senator Vanstone and Dr Kemp. Other Ministers will be co-opted for specific items as required.

The Employment Committee subsumes the Economic Committee.

21 October 1996