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PRIME MINISTER

BLIND TRUSTS AND MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS

In October last year I commissioned a report on the possible use of Blind Trusts by Commonwealth office-holders, including Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries.

The report, prepared by the secretaries of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Attorney-General's Department and the Treasury, concludes that Blind Trusts and management agreements do not provide a complete solution to problems of conflict of interests for office-holders. They could, however, be worthy of greater examination to see if they are appropriate additions to the range of available measures.

The Government is still considering the report.

At the time of commissioning the report I undertook to consult widely before deciding whether any changes to the current arrangements are necessary.

I am therefore providing copies of the report to the Leaders of the Opposition and the Australian Democrats and seeking their comments.

The report is also available on request from my office and on the Internet (<http://www.nla.gov.au/pmc/blind/index.html>). I would welcome submissions or comments from individuals or organisations.

3 February 1997