PRESS STATEMENT:
MALCOLM FRASER:

WOOL INDUSTRY RE-ORGANIZATION

The Central Authority for the wool industry has at last come into being. It may be an indication of the size of the task involved in that it has taken five months since the passage of the necessary Commonwealth legislation to get the new Wool Board appointed and operating.

The two wool growing organizations represented on the Australian Wool Industry Conference have chosen their representatives and the non-grower representatives on the Board have been appointed by the Minister from names suggested by the Wool Industry Conference.

Sir William Gunn, who has led the Australian Wool Board and International Wool Secretariat for some years, is the first Chairman of the new Wool Board. As such, he will be the most powerful man ever to have come from the ranks of the Australian Wool Industry. The new Wool Board will be taking over the functions not only of the old Australian Wool Bureau - which is also largely responsible for the International Wool Secretariat, but also it will assume the functions of the Wool Research Committee and the Wool Testing Authority. Sub-Committees of the Board will probably be appointed to administer these particular functions.

Sir William Gunn has shown an acute insight into the needs of the industry by publicly saying that one of the first tasks of the new Wool Board will be the formation of a Marketing Committee to investigate all aspects of wool marketing on a continuing basis, and to advise on measures to meet changing market conditions.

It is well known that one of the wool grower organizations only agreed to the formation of the new organization on the understanding that such a Marketing Committee would be appointed. I believe it inevitable that this Marketing Committee will recommend fundamental changes in the marketing of the Australian wool clip.

These changes may be more radical than the floor price plan, which has been fought for so long by the Australian Wool and Meat Producers' Federation. When this Marketing Committee does make its recommendation I hope it will be possible for the whole industry to accept and support them.

The new Wool Board will be a powerful voice for the industry in dealing with any Government of the day. In the past grower organizations have made their own individual representations to the Government on different matters. Very often there has been no similarity of approach between the organizations.

While I am sure individual organizations will be able to have access to the appropriate Government Ministers, it is quite clear that the main approach to the Government on matters of policy affecting the industry will come from the Australian Wool Industry Conference via the Australian Wool Board.

The new organization will make it possible for a united approach to be developed before putting matters to the Government. This puts the industry into a much more powerful position.

One matter which may be up for consideration is the question of a Government contribution to wool promotion. Up to the present time the Government has never made any direct contribution to promotion for any industry but it does make a considerable contribution to research. For example, for every £1.0.0, the woolgrowing pays into research the Government pays in £2. 0. 0.
I recently saw a report that one of the members of the Australian Wool Industry Conference said he believed that the Government should make a contribution to increase available funds for wool promotion. Quite clearly, if the suggestion is to have any success, it will have to be supported by a majority of members of the Australian Wool Industry Conference and by the Australian Wool Board. This is the channel through which such matters must be put to the Government.