



3 September 2003

GOOD COMMUNICATIONS IS GOOD GOVERNMENT, SAYS PROSPECT

Prospect today (Wednesday) broadly welcomed the interim report to the Prime Minister of the Phillis Review of Government Communications. The report builds upon a number of recommendations made by Prospect to the review in written and oral evidence to the review team.

As the union that represents the majority of staff employed in the GICS, Prospect agrees with the report's findings that:

- effective communications must lie at the heart of government policy development and delivery
- the professionalism required in government communications should be recognised and seen as an equal player in terms of policy development and delivery
- there is a need for an enhanced role and resources for the regional and government news network
- the role played by the centre needs to be strengthened and have a more effective strategic approach, including acting as a centre of expertise for the development of professional standards
- the centre must provide a stronger role in the recruitment, training and career development of communications staff in government and have a clearer role in resolving and arbitrating on disputes, and
- clearer guidelines are needed for the roles of special advisors and civil servants

Prospect also backed the recommendation that there was a need for greater "transparency" in government communications and that information from government was tarnished when it was believed to have come from "political" sources.

Prospect negotiator Garry Graham said: "These recommendations represent a step forward in seeking to regain the public's trust in the information provided by government.

"They have been welcomed by our members in GICS who do a highly professional job, often in acutely pressurised environments and against the background of a significant expansion in print and electronic media coverage.

"Relations and contacts between special advisors and GICS members vary across government. These relations work well in areas where there are effective communications between groups and a clear understanding with regard to roles and responsibilities."

Ends

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