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New Melbourne headquarters for AIRC

The national headquarters of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission and the Australian Industrial Registry will move to 11 Exhibition Street, Melbourne in the year of the centenary of the Commission's foundation.

The Commission and the Registry have committed to a 12-year lease for six floors in the 11 Exhibition Street development. The property is in Melbourne's CBD and is now being developed by the Commonwealth Property Fund. Design and construction of the building commenced in early 2002 and is now well advanced.

The property is only a couple of hundred metres from the premises currently occupied by the Commission and the Registry at 80 Collins Street, and the move is expected to take place in late 2004 or early 2005. The tribunal will be accessed through its own building entrance off Exhibition Street and will occupy levels 4 to 9 with a floor area about the same size as its current Melbourne premises.

The Industrial Registrar, Mr Nicholas Wilson, said today:

"The move by the Commission and the Registry to 11 Exhibition Street will provide the organisation with a separate building identity for its national headquarters in the year it celebrates the centenary of its foundation.

"The new premises will also provide a significant opportunity to improve service delivery through upgraded conference and court facilities. Our design for the new premises will aim to incorporate electronic service delivery principles, with an eye to enhancing our videoconferencing, online court and electronic lodgment capabilities.

"The decision to relocate provides the Commission and the Registry with a timely opportunity to design modernised facilities in conjunction with our key stakeholders – unions, employer groups and practitioners – in a way which assists their work."

Since the passage of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act in 1904 the Commission, its predecessors, and the Registry have been headquartered in Melbourne in only a handful of premises. Research to date indicates the previous locations included:

- shared accommodation with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department at 61 Spring Street (Registry only) from 1905 for several years;
- 468 Lonsdale Street (also known as Rostella House), between 1920 to the late 1950s;

- 451 Little Bourke Street, (also known as 451 Law Courts Place) between 1959 and 1979; and
- Nauru House, 80 Collins Street, since December 1979.

The Commonwealth Government has provided assistance towards the fit-out costs in the form of additional appropriation in the 2003–04 Budget.

Mr Wilson also acknowledged the considerable assistance of the Registry's property consultants, United KFPW, in undertaking its tender process and finalising the commercial terms.

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission was first established nearly 100 years ago as the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.

The Australian Industrial Registry, which was established at the same time, provides administrative support to the Commission and has responsibilities with respect to the registration of unions and employer associations.

For further information please contact:

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