The Honourable Justice Giudice
President
Australian Industrial Relations Commission
Nauru House
80 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Justice Giudice

Re: 2001-2002 SAFETY NET REVIEW

I attach for your information recent correspondence between the Commonwealth and the ACTU on matters relating to MYEFO forecasts and TRYM modelling.

Yours sincerely

Linda Lipp
Assistant Secretary
Wages Policy Branch
25 March 2002
Mr A. Watson
Senior Industrial Officer
Australian Council of Trade Unions
393 Swanston Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Mr Watson

I refer to your correspondence of 20 and 21 March concerning matters relating to the MYEFO forecasts and TRYM.

The Commonwealth rejects the assertion made in the correspondence that it has not provided clear and unequivocal answers to questions put to it by the ACTU. The claim of obfuscation is unfounded.

In the present matter we have already provided specific answers to the questions, which the ACTU has put to us. These responses do not appear to have resolved your concerns. It appears that the phrasing of the ACTU’s questions is not identifying with sufficient clarity the actual matters you are seeking to elucidate. The ACTU’s reply submission does indicate some misunderstanding of the process used to prepare Budget and MYEFO forecasts. If we are to be of further assistance, it would be useful if the ACTU could provide some explanation regarding the perceived problems or issues to which your questions are addressed. We will then consider what further information we may be able to provide.

We note your request that a suitable witness be made available for cross-examination on the first day of proceedings.

We do not at this stage rule out making a witness available, although we are not persuaded that is the preferable course for the parties to follow. Our strong view is that it is incumbent on the parties to attempt to resolve issues of a technical nature by agreement where possible. They can then document the outcome in a convenient and readily understandable form for the Commission and the other parties.

In our view this process is likely to be more fruitful than cross-examination of a witness.

Yours sincerely

Linda Lipp
Assistant Secretary
Wages Policy Branch
25 March 2002

cc all parties 2001-02 Safety Net Review