

HUGE SUM TO MAKE AIRWAYS SAFE

CANBERRA, Sept. 14: The Federal Cabinet today approved a £5,179,000 programme to modernise and extend radio communication and navigation safety aids for the Australian airways system.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Chifley) said tonight that it was estimated that £1,151,000 would be spent this financial year and the balance in the next or subsequent years.

The programme includes the provision of 180 radio transmitters costing £264,000 to replace low-power equipment, extend the internal point-to-point network, complete some transmitters and duplicate homing beacon transmitters at important centres.

It is proposed to complete 30 radio range stations now being installed and extend the system by nine ranges at a cost of £230,000, and to purchase radar distance-measuring beacons for 489 stations costing £657,000 to "assist air traffic control by defining precisely where obstacles do and do not occur."

Other plans are for the provision of instrument-landing systems costing a total of £455,000 at 13 locations to ensure that aircraft ending long trans-ocean flights are able to land in bad conditions and to prevent losses through petrol consumption and decreased aircraft usability; and the provision of better lighting at airports.

The radar measuring beacons will keep a pilot continuously aware of his exact position by showing on a dial in the aircraft the distance from a radio range station. So far as is known Australia is the only country which has advanced to the stage of calling tenders for this equipment.