

UNITED STATES NAVAL COMMUNICATIONS STATION AT NORTH WEST CAPE

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON. R.G. MENZIES,
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
17TH MAY, 1962

As Honourable Members are aware, the United States Naval Authorities have for some time been investigating possible sites and studying the feasibility of establishing a Naval Communications Station in Western Australia. Following these investigations the United States Government has formally requested permission to establish and operate such a station at North West Cape.

The Commonwealth Government has approved the request.

The Western Australian Government, which has been kept informed, has already rendered considerable assistance in the initial survey activities. It has expressed its desire to cooperate to the fullest possible extent in the project - an offer which is greatly appreciated by the Commonwealth Government.

The purpose of the Station, which will include a complex antenna system, high powered transmitting and receiving equipment, and administrative and supporting facilities, is to provide radio communications for United States and allied ships over a wide area of the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific.

The power supply required for the Station will be provided by conventional type diesel motors.

The total area of land affected by the project will be about 28 square miles. Of this area, all except about 4 square miles will continue to be available for such activities as grazing, subject for technical reasons to restrictions on certain types of construction or installations.

The estimated capital cost of the Station itself will be of the order of £A33million. Substantial additional funds will be required for such things as housing and family amenities. The United States Government will meet in full the expenditure required for both the construction and operation of the Station, which will be without cost to the Australian Government.

Construction is planned to commence as soon as possible and will be at its peak from early 1963 to late 1965. During this period employment on the project is expected to be between 800 and 1000 people.

In the construction of the Station, the maximum practicable use will be made of Australian contractors, labour and materials. Detailed liaison will be established between the United States Authorities and appropriate Australian Departments and Authorities to achieve this.

Present plans provide for an eventual population in the area, to operate and maintain the Station, of approximately 450, including both United States and Australian personnel and their dependants. Married quarters and essential community facilities will be provided for these people. A detailed agreement is being worked out with the United States Government to cover the status of American personnel who will be in Australia in connection with the Station.

In addition to normal inter-service, technical and administrative liaison between the United States Authorities responsible for the Station and co-operating Australian Departments and Services, arrangements will be made for consultation between the two Governments on matters relating to the Station and its use. The facilities of the Station will be available to the Australian Forces.

The matters to which I have referred will be embodied in a formal agreement between the two Governments which is now being prepared. This will be announced in due course.

The establishment of this Station in Australia will mark an important step in the steadily increasing defence co-operation between the two countries. It will make a highly significant contribution to general allied military capability in this area. It is within the spirit of co-operation envisaged under the ANZUS Treaty, under which the parties agreed to co-ordinate their efforts for collective defence for the preservation of peace and security.
