



PRIME MINISTER

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RELEASE OF COMMONWEALTH LAND ON SYDNEY
HARBOUR FORESHORES

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. William
McMahon, C.H. MP.

For some time past the Commonwealth has been discussing with the State of New South Wales the release of substantial areas of Commonwealth land on Sydney Harbour foreshores, so far held mainly for defence purposes.

The nature of the Commonwealth use has tended to keep the areas relatively undeveloped, at least in comparison to neighbouring lands so intensively developed commercially.

The Commonwealth has been conscious of the growing community awareness of the need for open parkland in a crowded metropolis, particularly such scenic land as much of the Commonwealth foreshore land is. A critical examination of the use to which the land is being put has been made to see to what extent it can be released for community use and benefit.

I had previously announced that, as a result of this review, the Commonwealth was willing to release to the State a total of about 550 acres of land at North Head, South Head, Dobroyd Point and Middle Head.

The land is to be used only for creating natural parkland and the Commonwealth will retain the right to resume possession in an emergency.

Following further consideration by the Government, I am now able to say that the firm basis of the Commonwealth's offer to the State, which the Premier has advised is acceptable to him, is as follows:

NORTH HEAD: The Commonwealth will make available approximately half of its holding of 639 acres, including a strip for a scenic drive between the land retained and the ocean front. The Commonwealth will retain the balance of the quarantine station and the School of Artillery.

SOUTH HEAD: The Commonwealth can release immediately an area of about eight acres on the headland, plus a narrow strip to provide access from Cliff Street. The Commonwealth is also prepared to make a further area available on leasehold bringing the total to about 33 acres of the 78 acres held by the Commonwealth.

DOBROYD POINT: The Commonwealth will transfer its entire holding of some 115 acres to the State.

MIDDLE HEAD: About 80 acres can be transferred now and a further 35 acres may be released later, subject to continued occupancy by the Commonwealth's School of Pacific Administration.

Most of these lands are available now for public use. It will, however, take a little time to complete transfers to enable the State to include these lands in the proposed Sydney Harbour Foreshores National Park.

I am sure that my fellow residents in Sydney, and the many visitors to the city, will welcome the availability of these lands as natural parkland.

I am also able to say that the Commonwealth has also agreed to return to the State another harbour facility. I refer to the Man O'War steps at Bennelong Point to be used for ferry services to the Opera House.

CANBERRA,

5 November 1972