



DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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GOVERNMENT WELCOMES RELEASE OF FRANCIS JAMES

The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Whitlam, said today that he warmly welcomed the news that Mr Francis James would be allowed to leave China on 16 January.

The Chinese Government had advised the Australian Embassy in Peking that Mr James would be deported, having been found guilty of espionage. Mr Whitlam added that the Chinese had said that the arrangement was being made as a friendly gesture now that diplomatic relations had been established between China and Australia.

Mr Whitlam said that arrangements had been made for Australian officials in Peking and Hong Kong to offer assistance to Mr James and that he had personally informed Mrs James of the news this morning.

The Prime Minister recalled that there had been a number of direct and indirect approaches made by and on behalf of the Australian Government, through several channels, and he welcomed the outcome. Mr Whitlam said he was certain that Australians, particularly those who had taken a close personal interest in Mr James' welfare, would be very pleased that the uncertainty surrounding his well-being had now been resolved and that he had been allowed to leave China.