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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. Hawke, and the Premier of Western Australia, Mr. Burke.

The Commonwealth and Western Australian Governments have agreed on January 1 next year as the date for the handover to the State of the Army land on Rottneest Island.

The State Government will pay the Commonwealth \$2.2 million as a contribution towards the replacement elsewhere of improvements on the 55.7 hectares of land.

Arrangements for the transfer have been worked out by Commonwealth and State officials and were announced today by the Prime Minister, Mr. Bob Hawke, and the Premier of Western Australia, Mr. Brian Burke.

This follows Mr. Hawke's agreement last September to a request by Mr. Burke for the return of the land, ending years of Commonwealth-State argument about it.

Under the arrangements, the State will make payments of \$1.1 million on January 1 and July 1 with vacant possession on January 1 and the handing over of title on July 1.

The State has been relieved of the responsibility of finding acceptable replacement facilities for the Army.

The Commonwealth originally sought \$2.9 million as the State's contribution to the replacement of facilities and the State offered \$2 million. The agreed contribution follows discussions between officials.

Mr. Hawke and Mr. Burke both expressed pleasure that the arrangements for the transfer had been completed and that there had been agreement between the Commonwealth and the State on the terms of the transfer.

Mr. Hawke said that as someone who had visited the island on many occasions in the past, he had great affection for Rottneest's unique charm, lifestyle and environment. He was delighted to have had the opportunity as Prime Minister to make more of the island available to Western Australia.

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Mr. Burke said the handover on January 1 was a day that all Rottnest lovers had looked forward to for many years.

Like the rest of the island, the land would be placed under the control of the Rottnest Island Board. No decisions would be made about its future use until after the review of public submissions on the interim development plan for the island.