



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

5 October 1984

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PREMIER OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA, BRIAN BURKE

The Prime Minister, the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr Holding, and the Western Australian Premier, Mr Burke, met this morning to discuss land rights and Aboriginal Affairs issues.

The discussions were extremely productive.

Mr Burke has invited the Federal Government to nominate an officer of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to participate in the drafting of Western Australian land rights legislation.

The Federal Government has accepted this offer and an official will work with the Western Australian Government on a full-time basis.

Other related issues, including Aboriginal health, welfare and education were discussed and there will be continuing consultation and communication between the Prime Minister, Mr Holding and Mr Burke on all these matters.

The Federal Government in accepting its obligations at a national level for Aboriginal land rights recognises the interests of Western Australia in addressing its problems.

The Seaman Commission's report and recommendations, together with the Western Australian Government's statement of principles, provide a valuable basis on which to address these issues in that State.

The Federal and State Governments will work together to ensure that common principles are adopted in the formulation of land rights legislation.

The Commonwealth remains committed to its constitutional responsibilities in this area, but in fulfilling these responsibilities the Federal Government will acknowledge the particular needs of Western Australia.

The decision to accept the Premier's offer to become involved in the drafting process acknowledged the particular Western Australian situation and the benefit to be obtained by close Commonwealth-State co-operation in the formulation of these policies.

The Federal Government in developing its legislation is concerned to establish common principles which can also accommodate the different needs and aspirations of the States.