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PRESS RELEASE FROM THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN.

WARDANG ISLAND PURCHASED.

28.5.72

The State Government has bought Wardang Island, off the Yorke Peninsula, and will return it to South Australia's Aboriginal people, the Premier, Mr. Dunstan, announced today.

The island is to be handed over to the Aboriginal Lands Trust for development as a tourist resort.

Five miles long and two miles wide, Wardang Island is off the Point Pearce Aboriginal Reserve and Port Victoria.

Originally a burial ground of the Narangga Tribe it was first proclaimed and reserved for Aborigines in 1887 but reverted to Crown Land in 1948.

Protracted negotiations with the holder of the present lease

Mr. H.G. Pryce had now been completed and terms agreed under which Mr. Pryce would relinquish his lease.

"Completion of these negotiations - in accordance with the promise we made in our 1970 election policy speech - will enable the Trust to develop a major Aboriginal enterprise with a high profit potential.

"It will also return to the Aboriginal people of this State land of which they feel they have been unjustly deprived", Mr. Dunstan said.

The Lands Trust - an all-Aboriginal body - was set up by the 1966 Labor Government to hold Aborigine reserve land in perpetuity and administer such land for the benefit of the Aboriginal people.

The Trust has already taken over the administration of the Point Pearce Reserve.

Mr. Dunstan said it was anticipated that Wardang Island would be developed as a tourist resort with boating, fishing, water-skiing, and swimming facilities together with an Aboriginal artifact industry.

The precise form of this development would be worked out with the Trust who might retain advisers to assist the operation in its formative stages.

The island was surrounded by many good beaches, numbers of which were suitable for surfing and excellent fishing was available.

"The tourist venture has excellent chances of providing high returns.

"In addition the return of Wardang Island is of symbolic importance to the Aboriginal people of South Australia while its development along the lines I have outlined will generally enhance the State's tourism resources", the Premier said.

The State Government's approach in returning traditional lands and guaranteeing Aboriginal ownership and administration was in marked contrast to the approach of the present Federal Government which had steadfastly ignored the need for such guarantees.

Discussions would now take place with the Trust on the timing of the hand-over and subsequent development.