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## PRIME MINISTER

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### ADDRESS AT CEREMONY TO HAND OVER CHEQUE TO THE UNESCO APPEAL TO SAFEGUARD THE ACROPOLIS

It gives me great pleasure to be here today to present Australia's contribution to the UNESCO Appeal for safeguarding the Acropolis.

The Acropolis and its monuments - most notably the Parthenon - is one of the most magnificent achievements of modern civilisation. It symbolises the Greek contribution to the whole of western civilisation, and is still looked to as the foundation and inspiration of our architecture. Its ruined buildings remind us of the supremely influential ideas of the ancient Greeks in philosophy, science, history, literature and politics, and of their galaxy of great men - Socrates, Plato, Archimedes, Thucydides, Pericles and Sophocles to single out only a random few.

It is on these ideas and ideals that western civilisation is built. While the Acropolis is Greek, it is of incalculable significance and value to us and to the people of all nations. Unfortunately, this value has not always been appreciated.

During the seventeenth century, the Acropolis was reduced to an expanse of ruins by a gunpowder explosion. Restoration of the Acropolis began in the nineteenth century and has continued to the present. Now atmospheric pollution is attacking the Acropolis' stone surfaces, and there is an urgent need for further restoration.

At last year's UNESCO General Conference, a Resolution - co-sponsored by Australia - authorised a world wide campaign of public and private aid in co-operation with the Greek Government to safeguard the Acropolis.

In Australia, that campaign is getting under way, and I am delighted to see that Ethnic Radio will be mounting an Acropolis radiothon on 15 May.

Today we are contributing \$100,000 to the UNESCO campaign out of respect for the great contribution classical Greek thought and culture has made to the world, and the contribution Greeks have made to the development of our nation.

/Greeks

Greeks and their children have increased the numbers of Australians by some 300,000. Their contribution to all aspects of Australian life has made our society more vital and diverse.

Australia has gained a great deal from ancient and modern Greece, from the values of which the Acropolis is a living symbol, and from the hard work and culture of the Greeks who have become part of our nation.

It gives me great pleasure to hand over this contribution to safeguarding one of the world's treasures.

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