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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

WEDNESDAY, 10 MARCH 1982

AUSTRALIAN GREEK PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS

I have announced today the introduction of a program of Australian Greek Presidential Awards in honour of the visit of President Karamanlis.

The awards reflect the special links which Australia has with Greece through our large Greek community, and will help to maintain and strengthen them.

Awards will be granted each year to eight young Australians to allow them to study or gain practical experience in Greece. The awards will cover a wide range of activities that will foster the maintenance and development of Greek culture within Australia's multicultural society. Examples include opportunities for young Greek Australians to work or study in their own fields for 12 months, for migrant education teachers or ethnic community workers to improve their understanding of Greek customs, and for high school students to spend time in a Greek school, billeted with a Greek family. Awards may also be granted to student teachers or teachers of modern Greek language, and social welfare workers, doctors and lawyers working with the Greek Australian community.

Participants in the program will be selected by a national committee that will comprise six representatives of the Greek community, and representatives of the relevant Government departments and the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs. The Office of Youth Affairs will be responsible for administration of the Program.

Nominations for awards will be invited from Greek community organisations throughout Australia, as well as applications from individuals, to be lodged with the Office of Youth Affairs by 1 July 1982 for the first round of awards.

Awards will be made to people under 30 years of age, on the basis of their proposals outlining the activities they wish to undertake and the expected benefit of the award to the participants and the wider links between Australian and Greek society.

The awards will cover the return fare to Greece for the participant and a living allowance. The living allowance and the period of the award, which can be for 12 months, will vary depending on the requirements of the individual and the type of activity for which the award is granted.