



**PRIME MINISTER**

FOR MEDIA

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26 1983

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF BICENTENNIAL PROGRAM**

The Prime Minister today released outline proposals for a program of national and international events to commemorate Australia's Bicentenary in 1988.

It is an imaginative, varied and exciting collection of activities brought together by The Australian Bicentennial Authority after two years of extensive consultations with all sections of the Australian community.

As a basis for planning the Commonwealth Government has agreed to commit \$166 million (July 1982 prices) towards a program of national and international activities.

This commitment is additional to the Commonwealth's recent announcements of major projects linked to the Bicentenary. These projects are The Australian Bicentennial Road Development Program, the new Parliament House, the Alice Springs-Darwin Railway, The Australian National Gallery's Bicentennial Collection, Redevelopment of the Australian War Memorial and the construction of the Australian Radio Telescope.

The firm Commonwealth financial commitment of \$166 million to specific Bicentennial activities to be developed by The Australian Bicentennial Authority will allow the State and Territory Governments, Local Governments and the private sector to work with the Commonwealth in planning their contributions to ensure the success of these Bicentennial activities.

Each of the States and the Northern Territory has agreed to enter into detailed negotiations to develop and stage the national and international program of activities. There is, however, no commitment to the funding and staging of any individual item at this stage. Developmental work on these individual items will proceed over the next 12-18 months before final decisions will be made on the activities to be incorporated into the program of Bicentennial activities.

In its draft form the program combines community activities, education, entertainment and the provision of permanent facilities in a program which will strengthen our national identity, purpose and will.

The proposed activities fall into a number of general areas:

- . A Commonwealth/State Commemorative program to provide memorials to the Bicentenary;
- . Major events to provide a focus for Australians in 1988, including a Travelling Exhibition on the theme of the Bicentenary, 'The Australian Achievement';
- . Educational and information activities including an inquiry into Australian studies programs in schools which would lead to a deeper appreciation among young Australians of their heritage and Australia's path in the future;
- . Community based activities, including a nationwide program of Aboriginal involvement offering all Australians the opportunity of coming to a better understanding of Aboriginal traditions and aspirations;
- . Arts and entertainment activities including performers from all countries which have contributed to the diversity of today's Australian community;
- . A year-long program of major sporting activities.

The planning and implementation of the Bicentennial program would be very much a partnership between governments at all levels, business, communities and individuals.

The Australian Bicentennial Authority has been established to plan and co-ordinate the year-long program of activities. Through its network of State Councils and Advisory Committees the Authority will be a focal point for information, guidelines and participation. It will be the body through which Australians from all walks of life can channel their enthusiasm, talents and ideas to make 1988 a great occasion for us all.

As befits a national endeavour of this kind it is important that the Authority enjoys the support and confidence of all Governments and the community and that there is a close and effective working relationship between all groups connected with the Bicentenary.

Every company, organisation, club and person has the chance of participating in the Bicentenary. Indeed it is pleasing to note the level of interest and activity already underway on Bicentennial activities. As a result of the shared experience, the Bicentenary will be a unique, unifying experience.

The program has a strong emphasis on community and educational aspects which should lead to improvements in the quality of life in the years after the Bicentenary.

Above all the Bicentenary will provide an opportunity for all Australians to reflect on their origins, to learn the lessons of history and to use them to plan for a better society in the future.

The Bicentenary will be a most important event for Australia. It will be a time for reviewing the advances of the past and weighing the opportunities and challenges of the future. It will be an occasion for all Australians.