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## PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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### LOCAL GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE GRANTS

The Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Bicentenary, Mr Barry Cohen, MP today announced a \$17.5 million grants program aimed at helping local government authorities around Australia to undertake Bicentennial activities in 1988.

Mr. Cohen said that under the Local Government Initiative Grants Program each local government authority in Australia would be eligible for a grant of \$2,000 plus \$1 per head of population in the area. Local government authorities would be required to match the grants on a dollar for dollar basis.

Provision had also been made for unincorporated areas such as the Australian Capital Territory, Australian Island Territories and certain areas in the Northern Territory.

"The Program is an example of the efforts being made by the Commonwealth Government and the Australian Bicentennial Authority to ensure that communities throughout Australia will be able to participate in the celebrations", Mr Cohen said.

"It is important that the celebrations in 1988 involve all Australians and these grants provide an excellent incentive for such involvement."

The Minister said the grants could be used to finance a wide range of Bicentennial activities from capital projects to activities of a more celebratory nature.

He said proposals nominated for funding should be of benefit and significance to a broad cross section of the community. They should be relevant to the Bicentenary and be carried out or completed in 1988.

Authorities could direct their resources into regional projects if they agreed to combine all or part of their grants.

Mr Cohen said it was a condition of the scheme that local government authorities select Bicentennial activities in association with local Bicentennial Community Committees. Already, more than 400 of these Committees had been established.

Mr Cohen said the Chairman of the Australian Bicentennial Authority, Mr John Reid, AO would be writing to each local government authority to give details of the program.

The closing date for funding applications will be January 1986.