



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE BY THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER, MR BOWEN
AND THE CHIEF MINISTER OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY, MR HATTON

The Acting Prime Minister, Mr Bowen and the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, Mr Hatton today announced joint Commonwealth/State Bicentennial funding for three projects in Central Australia.

The three projects are the restoration of the Hermannsburg mission settlement, the Ghan Railway preservation project and the Alice Springs Telegraph Station.

The Hermannsburg mission settlement represents a unique and fairly well preserved example of missionary contact and influence on Aboriginal life in Australia from 1877.

The Ntaria Land Trust and Council, who are the owners and managers of the site, have undertaken to restore the historic structures in recognition of their significance as part of the cultural heritage of all Australians.

Australian Bicentennial commemorative funding will allow the restoration and interpretation of the major historic structures at the Hermannsburg mission settlement.

The old Ghan played an important role in the development of Central Australia and is of major historical significance to the Northern Territory and South Australia. On 6 August, 1929 the first old Ghan train service arrived in the then town of Stuart. The narrow gauge service was replaced in 1980 by the standard gauge line which connects Alice Springs to Adelaide.

Some 30 kilometres of the old Ghan railway between Macdonnell Siding and Ewaninga Siding is being restored with the support of Australian Bicentennial funding. Its operation as a tourist attraction will commence in 1988 on the 59th anniversary of the inaugural old Ghan service.

The Alice Springs Telegraph Station project will provide the opportunity for a 24 hour live-in experience for school classes at the old telegraph station, five kilometres from the centre of Alice Springs.

Activities for school children will provide an authentic historic experience in demonstrating an important facet of early development in the Alice Springs area. The facilities will also continue to be available to all sections of the community and visitors to the Northern Territory.

Mr Bowen said that the Commonwealth was pleased to support three such diverse and distinctive projects in the Alice Springs region which will preserve important facets of the region's development.

Mr Hatton said that the projects represent significant aspects of the region's history. It is also pleasing to note that the restoration of the Hermannsburg mission settlement will be undertaken by the Ntaria Council.