

13



PRIME MINISTER

THE DEATH OF MR ANDREAS PAPANDREOU

I have today sent a message to the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, Mr Simitis, expressing my personal condolences, and those of the government and people of Australia, on the death of the former prime minister, Mr Andreas Papandreou.

Mr Papandreou was a leading figure in the political life of Greece for more than 30 years. His strong commitment to democratic principles resulted in his imprisonment in 1967 and exile for almost seven years.

On his return to Greece in 1974, as founder of the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement, Mr Papandreou led his country into a new political era, serving for three terms as prime minister from 1981 to 1989 and from 1993 to 1996.

Australia and Greece have always enjoyed a close relationship, founded on the historical links between our countries and the many Australians of Greek origin. We share with the Greek nation its sorrow at Mr Papandreou's death.

I have asked the Premier of Victoria, Mr Kennett, to represent Australia at the funeral in Athens on Wednesday.

24 June 1996