



PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

15 FEB 1985,

Dear Margaret,

The approach of Australia's Bicentenary in 1988 is focussing attention on documents marking major turning points in Australia's history. Recent consideration has been given in Australia to the fact that the 'original' document containing the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia is kept in London.

I understand that, in accordance with United Kingdom practice since 1849, two copies of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (with the Constitution set out in its section 9) were printed on vellum and that the 'master copy', endorsed with the formula of Royal Assent and signed by the Clerk of the Parliaments, was deposited with the House of Lords Records. A duplicate copy was, I understand, sent to the Public Record Office.

I believe that it would be a most valuable contribution to Australia's Bicentenary in 1988 if the 'master copy' or the duplicate could be provided on permanent loan to Australia. All necessary measures for the protection of the document would of course be taken.

I should be most grateful for your consideration of this proposal.

Yours sincerely
Bob Hawke

The Rt Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP
Prime Minister of Great Britain
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AUSTRIA: Relazioni PT 2.

