



PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

Dear Margaret,

27 SEP 85

Thank you for your letter of 30 May 1985. On behalf of the Government and people of Australia, may I thank you for your Government's decision to contribute one million pounds to our Bicentenary. There are strong ties between our two countries underpinned by history, culture, language, values and human relationships, and significant British participation in our celebrations will be warmly welcomed by the Australian people.

I understand that a number of proposals are currently being examined by the Britain-Australia Bicentennial Committee for inclusion in the British program. In themselves, these projects have the potential to forge new relationships and ties between our countries. Like you, I hope that the private sector will follow and build on the lead of your Government, and help make 1988 a most memorable year for both our countries.

At the present time a matter of particular interest to us is the choice of a project to provide an enduring reminder of Britain's relations with Australia. I hope it will be possible in the near future to make some suggestions for consideration by your Government about a project which will be a suitable and lasting legacy of the great and continuing British contribution to our country.

I am grateful for your offer of a temporary loan of an original copy of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act and a gift of a facsimile of the Act. You will understand however that this does not meet the concern which prompted my enquiry concerning a permanent loan of one of the original documents containing the Australian Constitution.

The Australian Constitution has great significance for the people of this country. It marks our birth as a nation. At the same time it is the fundamental document in the continuing operation and development of our federal system of government. Given the relative youth of our political system, the written Constitution takes on a particular importance.

Permanent possession of the original document containing the Australian Constitution is thus a matter of great consequence for all Australians.

It is against this background that I hope that you will find it possible to reconsider my request for a permanent loan of an original copy of the Act. I might add that Australia's Federal Opposition parties are also of the view that at least one original copy of the Act should be kept in Australia.

Yours sincerely

Bolton

The Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher, MP
Prime Minister