



10 DOWNING STREET

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Mr. Thompson + 1  
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THE PRIME MINISTER

FFA 227/11	
RECEIVED IN REGISTRY No. 52	
- 7 JAN 1986	
DESK OFFICER	REGISTRY
INDEX	PA Action Taken
<i>[Signature]</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>

3 January 1986  
 copy passed to C(2) who have  
 been informed that we  
 Mr. Turner SPA if *[Signature]*  
 cc PS PS/PUS L W Harding  
 S J Ireland & Wilson  
 Grateful if you wd arrange  
 transmission WTB

Dear

In your letter of 25 September you asked me to consider again whether we could accede to your earlier request for the permanent loan of one of the two original copies of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitutional Act.

This is a very difficult problem. At my request the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Lord Chancellor have looked afresh for some way in which we could meet your request, which is received here in London with great sympathy. But I am very sorry to have to tell you that we cannot make an exception for Australia by arranging a permanent loan. Our archival collections are rich in the history of the Commonwealth and other countries, and their chief virtue lies in their comprehensiveness. If we began to disperse them, even on so small a scale and for so good a cause, their value to researchers from all over the world who wish to consult them would be diminished.

I should, however, like to repeat the offer in my letter of 30 May, to present to you fine quality reproductions of the Act itself and of the Royal Commission of Assent, in a suitable presentation case. We would also be glad to make arrangements for the temporary loan of the Public Record Office copy for any commemorative exhibition.

I am sorry not to be able to be more helpful, but can assure you that I have been into the problem most carefully.

Yours sincerely  
Rajawadeh

The Honourable R.J.L. Hawke, A.C., M.P.