OLYMPIC GAMES HELLENIC TRIBUTE

The Hon. J. HATZISTERGOS [5.28 p.m.]: I draw the attention of the House to an event I attended last Sunday at the blessing of the site which will host the Hellenic tribute to the Olympic Games. Honourable members would be aware that the Olympic Co-ordination Authority provided an amount of $7.5 million for art projects to grace various Olympic venues. Nine of the 12 projects in that program are to be located at Homebush Bay. Only one project reflects the ancient origins of the modern Olympic Games, and that is the project which was blessed last Sunday. The project has been sponsored by the community and the ambitious fundraising venture of $435,000 is nearly complete. The monument will be erected 300 metres from the Olympic Stadium and 100 metres from the Olympic railway station.

The sculptor of the tribute, a person by the name of Robert Owen—a well-known Australian sculptor—was also responsible for creating a sculpture at the Olympic Games in Seoul. This monument has been able to be completed because of the work carried out by the Australian Hellenic Education Progressive Association [AHEPA], which has chosen Sydney as the location for the second of a trilogy of major public art projects in Olympic cities to celebrate the Greek origins of the Games. Hellenic Tribute Inc. is funding the public art, which will be located at the site currently known as Stockroute Park. AHEPA USA funded a comparable project in Atlanta and it is intended to complete this trilogy in Athens by constructing a similar tribute at the Olympic Games site in that city.

The work which it is envisaged will be erected at this site is known as Discobolus. It is named after and portrays a discus thrower known in ancient Greece as Discobolus, a symbol of the Olympic Games. Metaphorically speaking, the tribute encapsulates a disc being thrown by one of Zeus's twin sons, travelling through the millennia, and landing in the form of a contemporary disk, a compact disk, which reflects modern technology, information and the vast cultural applications of compact disks. Apart from the actual sculpture, which is seven metres in height and is surrounded by five ancient Greek columns, which reflect the five continents, there will be some vegetation in the nature of olive trees and Cyprus trees which have been dedicated to the various donors, each of whom has donated a minimum of $10,000 to sponsor one of the trees.

I say in every sense of the word that this project has been very much a community effort. The fundraising has been phenomenal, and has extended from little children who have drawn pictures for calendar sales to others who have organised various fundraising ventures such as fairs, festivals and other events to raise the necessary funds to enable this venture to come to fruition. Particular mention should be made not only of the community in New South Wales but also of the community in Canberra, the Hellenic Club having donated $70,000 towards this project. The efforts of the hard-working members of the committee have to be acknowledged, in particular Mr Tasha Vanos, who has been tireless in his efforts to see this project through and to raise the necessary funds. I congratulate all those involved.