

voice

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UNVEILING THE DESIGN

The monument design of the Australian Hellenic Memorial Foundation will be unveiled this Sunday.

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Community News

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Design unveiling on navy destroyer

BY NICHOLAS TZAFERIS

The winning model for the Australian Hellenic Memorial, which will be erected in Melbourne's Domain Gardens, will be unveiled this Sunday.

The Australian Hellenic Memorial Foundation and the Australian Defence Force will unveil the model aboard the Australian Navy Ship HMAS Torrens.

The winning model, which will be unveiled by Consul General of Greece to Victoria, Georgios Veis, will come from one of three designs that have been submitted.

The unveiling follows the establishment of the Australian Hellenic Memorial Foundation which was formed in 1994. State president of the RSL, Bruce Ruxton, is one of four patrons of the organisation.

The monument will be dedicated to the memory of Australian and Greek soldiers who fought and died for their nations.

Australian Defence Force public relations spokesman

Michael Marley said the Australian Navy was pleased to be involved with the initiative.

"It's an opportunity for us to draw a bit closer to the community," Mr Marley said.

"In terms of unveiling the monument, the Australian Navy has been pleased to make available as a venue, the destroyer escort HMAS Torrens which will be at Station Pier."

The Australian Defence Force had discussed the idea of its involvement in the memorial at length.

The initial drive for the erection of the memorial came from the involvement between Australians and Greeks in the Battle of Crete in the campaigns of 1941.

Mr Marley said the Australian Defence Force recognised that a memorial monument would represent more than just the unique alliance between Greek and Australian soldiers.

"As the event has drawn closer it has become apparent that the memorial represents much more in terms of the co-

operation between Australians who were born here and those of Greek heritage," Mr Marley said.

"It stands for the huge contribution the Greek community has made towards the development to Australia particularly Victoria.

"As time goes by for subsequent generations of Australians, it is important that the monument represents this co-operation and is a reminder of the need for that co-operation to continue."

President of the Australian Hellenic Memorial Foundation, Pandelis Kalimnakis, said between \$120,000 and \$150,000 needed to be raised in order to complete the project.

The fundraising campaign will begin on Sunday with an announcement on events that will be staged to help generate the funds.

The foundation has applied to the Australian Taxation Office for all donations to be made tax-deductible.

Mr Marley said the Australian Defence Force was



Optimistic: The Australia Defence Force is hopeful the monument will be ready in time for the Greek National Day march to the Shrine of Remembrance.

optimistic that the fundraising campaigns would be successful.

"If the initial fundraising is up to expectations, the intention is to commence construction of the memorial at the earliest possible date and to continue the fundraising while the construction is underway," he said.

"I have heard estimates that the monument could be ready as early as March next year."

This is the first project in Victoria that will commemorate the Greek and Australian

relationship in such a way.

A similar memorial monument exists in New Zealand.

"The New Zealand project was extremely successful and the fundraising there went very well," Mr Marley said.

"The monument was erected very swiftly indeed, hence the optimism about the early construction here in Victoria."

Mr Marley was non-committal about the size and form the monument will take.

"I don't want to say too much about the proportions because the unveiling has been

kept fairly secret at this point," Mr Marley said.

"It will be a monument the dimensions of which will indicate the tremendous contribution that Greeks have made to the development of Australian society."

Mr Marley confirmed the monument will be placed in a position that will be widely seen.

"It's on the St Kilda side of the gardens and in the area of the outer boundary of Government House so it will be in a fairly prominent position," Mr Marley said.