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## PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

FRIDAY, 26 MARCH 1982

### AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S TELEVISION FOUNDATION

The Commonwealth and State Governments have combined to support the establishment of the Australian Children's Television Foundation.

The Foundation will encourage the development, production and transmission of Australian Children's television programs of quality.

The Commonwealth Government has made an initial contribution of \$250,000 to the Foundation for the current financial year while Victoria, South Australia and the Northern Territory have contributed \$200,000, \$40,000 and \$3,700 respectively. New South Wales, Western Australia and Tasmania are also expected to support the Foundation financially.

The proposal is that the Commonwealth meets approximately half the cost of the Foundation (ie. up to \$1.5 million) over three years with the States sharing the remaining \$1.5 million. It is expected that by then the Foundation will be self-supporting.

The Commonwealth is committed to support the Foundation in 1982/83 with continued funding in 1983/84 and 1984/85, conditional on its performance in the initial two years of operation.

I agree with the Foundation that children's television should reflect the diversity of interests, lifestyles, expectations, special needs and multicultural heritage of Australian children, and thus contribute to a sense of national identity.

Television stations are required to show five hours of children's programs per week. About half of these are locally produced. But children's television in Australia has at times copied overseas programs or regrettably shown re-runs of many old programs. Whether this was because of cost or unavailability of programs, I do not know.

Nevertheless, the Government believes that there has been a discernible improvement in children's television in the last few years since the establishment of the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal's Children's Program Committee.

Recent achievements in children's programs produced in Australia include Simon Townsend's *Wonder World*, Shirl's *Neighbourhood*, *Matchmates* from commercial television and the work of the ABC's Children's Drama Unit in Melbourne