



PRIME MINISTER

E & O E - PROOF ONLY

Transcript of interview with "Molly" Meldrum - Countdown
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JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke it was almost a year ago that we launched International Youth Year and you said then that the Government would concentrate on youth throughout 85. You also said that, in the Address to the Nation earlier this year. The promises have now come with Priority One. Can you explain first of all what Priority One really is all about, how it came about?

PM: It's about young people. And it came out of our acceptance of our responsibility towards the young people of Australia, and particularly in International Youth Year. We didn't want to just do something in 85, have a splash and forget it. Priority One is calculated to address the problems of young people in 85, 86 and beyond because they are the greatest asset of this country. So we are talking about education, employment and training. Other things as well but essentially those things so that we're going to be able as a country Molly, to get our resources properly organised in a way which is going to help the young people of this country.

JOURNALIST: You've often referred to the problems you're aware are facing you. You're now giving them a chance and this is the Priority One pamphlet where you in fact pick this up in cinemas at the CES and just different places. And make sure you pick up one of these. You're giving the chance now for the Government and personally yourself, for the next week or so, for the youth to air their views, grievances and for what?

PM: Well that's right because we accept a responsibility as the Government Molly, to work out these programs in a way which we think are going to help to meet the problems of young people. But it's always been my view, because I'm closely associated with young people, that they don't want to have things just shoved down their neck. We oldies working out what their problems are and telling them how they should be solved, so we've accepted our responsibility of getting the thing going, but the purpose of the phone-in and my talkback appearances is for me to listen, basically to listen to young people. There'll be many, many phone calls not just the ones I've got to take personally. They'll be computerised and so as well as me getting directly from the calls I take the views of young people, we'll also have a profile then built up out of the computerised bank of phone calls and the expression of views, so that we'll be able to make a judgment about two things: One, what are the young people themselves saying about their problems. What sorts of things that ought to be done. And secondly, therefore, are there some modifications in the approach that we're adopting to take account of the views of the young.

JOURNALIST: Well obviously there's many. You see them all the time, you've touched on unemployed and many issues of unemployment that have by-products. You're making yourself available on radio stations right around the country - Adelaide SAFM, Perth 6PM, Brisbane FM104, Wollongong 200, Newcastle 2NX, Sydney 2MMM and Melbourne EFM and Hobart 7HO, within that time of being able to talk to them what, obviously you're leaving yourself quite open in the sense that you get a multitude of calls, I mean cranks and whatever, how will that bank of information be sorted out and get back to the Government?

PM: It's a highly computerised operation. It's mind-boggling the capacity that's now available with this new technology. It will mean that all the material that comes from those tens of thousands of calls that we expect to get will be computerised into topics so that we will be able to see, as I say have a profile of the thoughts of the young people of Australia. And then we will, as a government, study those views as I say make sure that we're on the right sort of track. If there are some variations in what we're doing, which seems sensible as a result of that, then we're prepared to adapt. What I want for the young people of Australia to understand is that we're concerned about helping them. We're not doing that from the point of view of saying look we know what your problems are, we know what the answers are. You better than anybody than anyone know what your own problems, your own concerns, your own aspirations are, how can we adapt and adjust and work together.

JOURNALIST: Right well as I say we've now launched Priority One it's something that's not just going to be over now to Christmas. It's going to be a continuing thing, as you said, that can go for the next two or three years until something perhaps is sorted out. I might also add Sydney are very lucky in the essence that they have this great concert coming up and that's on 8 December, Sunday at the Domain. In fact you'll be attending that as well, to open that particular concert. Thanks very much. I think it does give a lot of hope. As I say please pick up one of these pamphlets when you see them at the CES offices or at cinemas and it gives you all the information that needs to be told and gives you I think a lot of heart, once they read this. The last thing you've given me some good news and I'd like you to say it because it's just blown me out when you told me before.

PM: Well it's relevant to what we've been talking about, that is the inspiration, the views, the attitudes, the thoughts of the young people. I think one of the outstanding events of this year has been Bob Geldof's inspiration to the world and your very important part in it here in Oz for Africa. And Bob came to see me here in this office just a few weeks ago and he said to me directly the sorts of things he hoped we might be able to do. And one suggestion he made was could we help with aircraft for the distribution of famine relief in Africa. So I thought about it, so what I've decided is we'll make two hercules aircraft available. They'll need to be refitted, put into operational form and we'll fly them to Africa. That will cost about \$1.7 million. I've got that underway now and those two aircraft will be in Africa and operational by February of next year. And we're pleased that we've been able, in that way to respond to the magnificent initiative of Geldof internationally and you and the young people of Australia.

JOURNALIST: Well I think that's the greatest news I've heard.