



17

PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF JOINT NEWS CONFERENCE WITH KEVAN GOSPER AND
JOHN RALPH, NEW TAKANAWA PRINCE HOTEL, TOKYO
18 SEPTEMBER 1990

E & OE - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, you must be bitterly disappointed.

PM: Yes I am. Particularly for John Ralph, Kevan Gosper and all the team who've put so much work into it. They are the people up front. A marvellous team. There was an enormous amount of work done by hundreds and thousands of people behind the scenes. We honestly believed we had the best bid. We honestly believed that on merits, and given that the Games have only once in the history of the Games been in the Southern Hemisphere, we really thought that we could do it best and it was the Southern Hemisphere's turn. But the people with the votes thought otherwise.

JOURNALIST: Fair competition Mr Hawke?

PM: Of course you've got to accept it's a fair result.

JOURNALIST: The Greeks are very upset and say the people with the money have won the Games.

PM: Well the Greeks can speak for themselves. I don't know whether John Ralph or Kevan have got anything else to say, but that's -

GOSPER: I think the Greeks would be very disappointed, like we are. But it was a five round vote and it was a clear majority eventually for Atlanta, and we must be good losers. I agree with the Prime Minister. We had first class leadership in John Ralph. We had enormous support and we had a very good team. We could never have asked more from the Prime Minister. Now we're managing disappointment. We're disappointed for our colleagues in Melbourne. But we did our best. We had a very good bid and we had a very good argument. The decision I think finally rested on whether the members felt that Athens could confidently put on a Centennial Games. And their answer was no and therefore the United States looked the most secure option. That's the best conclusion I can come to.

JOURNALIST: How did we go in the voting?

GOSPER: We stayed in until the third round. In the second round we were actually coming second. But an astonishing thing happened in the third round. We fell back and were separated by one vote between ourselves and Toronto. Had we survived that round it may have been a different outcome, but I doubt it. I think finally what showed out was that Athens held in there until finally the members decided it wasn't a secure enough decision. They must have believed that the Americans could deliver a ... That's all I can conclude. But I mean there will be a lot of analysis going on. We're just disappointed for everybody who supported us.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, will we be having a go just like this for the year 2000?

PM: That's for the Australian Olympic Federation to consider.

GOSPER: And tonight's not to answer that. Thanks Prime Minister.

JOURNALIST: So what have you got to say to all those people in Melbourne who've gathered tonight in the squares and Flinders Street Station?

PM: Thanks for your support and your enthusiasm. All we can say together is we did our best and we're sorry we couldn't deliver.

GOSPER: Absolutely. And I hope we can be good losers. We mustn't take anything away from Atlanta.

JOURNALIST: Mr Ralph, can we get your reaction?

RALPH: We have to abide by the decision of the members of the International Olympic Committee. We're all very disappointed. I'm disappointed for those people back home because so many, you know, thousands of people have put their backs behind this. We did our best. I think the bid itself was a strong bid. Our presentation today was clearly - it got a great reception. But it didn't come through in the votes.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, would you like to see this great spirit that was shown today by the Australians in some of the other endeavours that we're seeking like -

PM: Well Australians when they do pull together they are marvellous. It was great to see the spirit today. I'd like to see it as often as possible. But you can't expect that Australians are always going to be united on everything. We couldn't even get some of the people we thought should've supported us supporting us.

GOSPER: I'd just like to say that Australia was in one of the biggest world competitions in history. That's not bad to be in there for three rounds out of five. We wanted to win. We believed we'd win. We didn't win. But we were in the world competition.

JOURNALIST: Are you going back for 2000?

GOSPER: I wouldn't dare to answer that tonight. This is not the time to answer it. I think we just deal with the result today. We've got time to think about that later.

JOURNALIST: Is any city in Australia big enough to host the Olympic Games?

GOSPER: Melbourne. Sydney.

JOURNALIST: Mr Gosper, what's the attraction of the American television networks? Was that an important factor in the votes?

GOSPER: I can't account for the other members' minds on this. I suppose financial strengths and administrative capacity and organisation of people was what finally counted in the Americans' favour versus Athens. But I believe that we were every bit as good in organisation ability and in terms of the team and the capacity ... But we can't detract from the result.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, have you got anything to say to Senator Peter Walsh tonight?

PM: I guess he'll be celebrating.

JOURNALIST: What will you be doing this evening sir?

PM: As I say, I'll be hitting the mineral water - hard.

GOSPER: We'll be alright. We just want to handle it with dignity. OK.

ends