



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, MP
LAUNCH OF WORLD SUMMIT ON TELEVISION AND CHILDREN
TWO-WAY VIDEO LINK WITH MARK MITCHELL IN MELBOURNE
2 MARCH 1994**

MM: Prime Minister, Mr Keating, welcome. Thank you for being with us again today.

PM: Pleasure. Well I was with you a couple of years ago with Janet (Holmes a Court) and Patricia Edgar and David Hill when we launched, I think, Lift Off on that occasion. And that was a very successful launch and I am pleased to be back.

MM: Since that time Mr Keating you have made your position and your feelings about children's television very clear.

PM: Well I think that I have. I have tried to say that I think what children see on television is important in the way they think. The sensitivities they develop in their lives, their value system, and I think we have at least made some mark on commercial television in requiring that violence is not being telecast at times that kids are looking at television, and generally just making a more general point. That is, that a lot of the "b" grade material and rubbish which is on television ought to be improved and it is organisations such as the Children's Television Foundation which is, of course, leading the role in doing that.

MM: There is a theory that children enjoy it, that sort of rubbish.

PM: Well I think they will watch what is there for them to see. But in some of the products which the foundation has produced where it is kids looking at themselves rather than seeing someone banged up or Ninja Turtles, or whatever it might be, whether it is violence and other things, when they actually see something about themselves, in their own environment or a contemporary environment, particularly when they recognise the contemporary Australian quality of something they are looking at, they are much more interested. And I think the support

which the various things; Round the Twist and Lift Off and those things have had demonstrates that point.

MM: I think that is certainly true, Prime Minister, of Round the Twist. It was very Australian, Australian accents, Australian concepts, they have even had a ghost in the dunny. I guess the ghost in the dunny or the loo or the toilet, whatever it is called, wherever they watch it, is a fairly universal thing for kids.

PM: Well, I think it certainly brought a lot of attention from Australian children and support, and of course with Lift Off, I think it had something like a 5 million viewing audience in Britain and it has been a great success there, even greater than some of the so called popular programs like Mash and things like that. So, it has produced its own reward and as Janet said a few moments ago the BBC is now in a co-production with the foundation and I think that is the proof of the pudding.

MM: 5 million viewers in fact watched Round the Twist every Friday night. It out rated Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles at a time when they were enormously big everywhere in the world. Do you remember them at all?

PM: Yes, what ever happened to them? They vanished off the scene.

MM: They didn't have the foundation behind them, I guess. I believe that there is some good news about Round the Twist, Prime Minister, Patricia Edgar tells me that a feature film is being considered, is in fact in the pipeline. So, that will be something to look to. I believe you have something very special to announce today.

PM: Well I am very pleased to be able to announce, following discussions I had with Janet and Patricia last year, that I am able to announce the first world summit on television and children. Now, this is not just an Australian first, it is a world first. It will be in Melbourne next year, the Delegates are coming from around the ASEAN area, from China, from the United States, from Japan and its objective will be to look at the information highway, the thing Mr Gates was telling us about so eloquently a week or two ago, the fact that television will be interactive not just simply delivering product to children and others, but giving the capacity for interaction and therefore the important focus we should now have on the cultural impact of that medium, and this is the first international opportunity to get that focus. I think it also will underwrite the status of the quality of Australian children's television product and our foundation.

This will be a good thing for us because I think we are leading the world in thinking about television product for children and the organisation of television time for children. And given the fact that we

are now in this country about to embark upon pay television, where it can't be that many years away where we are looking at the capacity for interactive television, having if you like the world leader, and I think we are, in this medium of material for children and thought about children and television, having us in fact host this conference and manage it is, I think, a good thing for children around the world, for children in Australia, and a good thing for Australia's reputation as a country that has got good values and cares about its children.

MM: Thank you very much, Prime Minister, and thanks for your ongoing support.

PM: Good, Mark, pleasure.