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PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP
LAUNCH OF THE TRIPLE J TRANSMITTERS INTO REGIONAL
AUSTRALIA, PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA, 6 DECEMBER 1994**

E&OE PROOF COPY

It's so hot my make-up is running. I borrowed someone's make-up in the office and she said to me "do you want the lippy too?", and I said I'm not doing an impersonation of Julian Clary, I am only impersonating myself.

It is wonderful to be here and see this extension of Triple J's network. I suppose if you like the present and you are inclined to the future, and you look forward to the future, then you are inclined to Triple J. But if you are stuck in the past and you have got old fogies for friends then you are inclined against Triple J. And I suppose that probably marks out the Triple J supporters from those who are not. But what we have seen here is the development of a marvellous, authentic stretch of Australian communications and Australian radio. As David said, or Michael Lee said, that is from a small studio in Darlinghurst not so many years ago to now a national network of 1.8 million people. And now with the extensions into 22 regional areas, a much greater network altogether. And of course, their great strengths - Australian music and comedy - I mean HG and Roy were a couple of bodgies not so many years ago, now the most fabled social commentators in the country. Even Paul Lyneham and some of his colleagues in the ABC are feeling the pressures these days...the Kerry O'Briens of this world are feeling the pressure from Roy and HG. And they came along with Triple J.

But I think it also tremendous that Triple J's big contribution has been in breaking in new Australian bands - and not just the Coral Snakes today, but INXS, Yothu Yindi, Midnight Oil, and more recently they first recorded and broadcast the Newcastle band Silver Chair which I now understand are on top of the charts. I mean, with that support, just imagine what I could have done with The Ramrods back then in the 60s. I mean I did take them from nowhere to oblivion, and with this sort of support...the battle that I had to get them on the Parlaphone - and I did - and to get them played...I knew every manager of every radio library in Australia. And I would always have the 45

sitting on the edge of the desk, trying to get it played - the D-45's as they were then.

At any rate, the fact is that this is a great thing that Australia has become one of the music capitals of the world in popular music, and Triple J is of course, playing a tremendous role in all that. And of course, for apparently only 18 cents a year - it costs each of us only 18 cents a year, which is a little more value than 8 cents a day. Probably not, because I do think the ABC has stuck to its last and stuck to its charter, and I am not ashamed to say - I am very proud to say - that I am a core supporter of the ABC and Triple J.

And of course, the other thing is it's about the only station in the country where you would expect to find a woman disc jockey, which is also a breakthrough for Australian radio because it is rather monopolised.

I would like to just say that this....you know, you wonder when you pass these budgets, and the appropriations go out, whether it is money well spent, but I think this extension - which is \$20 million worth - to these 22 regional areas, and I am told we go something like...by 1996 Triple J will reach 44 regional areas and cover an additional 4.7 million people, then with 80% of the population. A far cry from the thing which Moss Cass kicked off in 1975 and which has come along from - as someone said earlier - that small studio in Darlinghurst. So, the Government is delighted to be involved with it - to find a place where young Australians can identify....certainly a radio station they can identify with, something that is not a bit provincial or parochial, that is unmistakably Australian, and to see this development is a great pleasure for all of us.

Last week I had the pleasure of launching what we call the Youth Training Initiative, and this is about saying to young Australians that we in this country care about them, we want to pass our sense of optimism on to them, that we won't let them slip out of the school system to be unemployed, that we will pick every one of them up and case manage them - that is individually relate to them and try to get them back into mainstream study or to work experience, or into a job - and that comes as well as the linkages now between secondary school and TAFE, the building of a proper vocational education system with TAFE, and the massive extension of the university system. But I think the commitment which we have made to young Australians - that nobody under the age of 20 should basically drop out of the system without being cared for, without being someone - an individual person case managing them, talking to them, finding out about their aptitude, their educational standards, their interests, and getting them back into study or work - is the sort of commitment a country this wealthy ought to make to its young people. That was launched last week, and I know that Triple J has a program of its own - the Triple J Extension - which is about much of the same thing, and that is giving young Australians a voice, and a role in the future.

So I can think of no better medium than Triple J to talk about issues which affect young people, to let them listen to the music that they like, to discover the Australian bands that in the past were there but incapable of discovery,

and to punch out a peculiarly and authentically Australian message and sound. This is a tremendously good development in our communications. Let me congratulate everybody associated with Triple J and the ABC - to David Hill and his colleagues - and to say that the Government will continue to support the ABC and Triple J, and let's hope that by 1996 we see this huge extension into provincial and rural Australia, and we see truly a national network come from it. It is with great pleasure that I launch this shift to 22 regional areas - this broadcast to 22 regional areas - as a further affirmation of our faith in Triple J and its message to young Australians. Thank you.

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