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**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER
THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP
LAUNCH OF PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS VIDEO
OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA**

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Thank you very much Major-General Fittock, to my colleague, Bruce Scott, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to congratulate the Minister in the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Dr Andrew Killer and all of the others who've been associated with putting together this video about prostate health.

It is true that traditionally one of the characteristics of men and Australian men in particular has been a reluctance to talk about intimate personal things and it's been, in a sense, a characteristic of the Australian psyche that that has been the case. There are signs, I believe very welcome signs, that in appropriate cases that attitude is changing. And the way in which this video - which I had the opportunity...I viewed most of it a few days ago - the way in which this video talks about a very important element of male health is very reassuring. It will be extremely beneficial, not only to the one in five Australian men over the age of 65 who are returned servicemen, but also to the rest of the male population of Australia of that particular age cohort and indeed even younger.

Prostate health is something that should be talked about. And just as it has been the case in relation to particular health issues facing women, they have been the subject of direct, tasteful, but totally accurate, valuable public discussion without embarrassment but with enormous benefit and assistance to women in our community, so it is in relation to issues of particular significance to men within our community. And the most valuable message that comes out of this video is that the incidence of prostate disease, whilst a matter of concern, ought not to be something that is feared or not to be something that can't be encountered, dealt with, and that even in its most severe form, and that is prostate cancer as the video demonstrates, there is very much life and a very full life after that.

And I want to especially compliment those in the audience who participated in the video. Because they've really broken through a communication resistance and barrier and made an important contribution to an understanding of something which if fully understood and fully dealt with and openly dealt with is going to greatly improve the enjoyment of life of a large section of the Australian population. It is true that people are living longer. It is true that medical science is putting a happy, full, invigorating life within the reach of increasing numbers of people over the age of 60, 70 and 80 and so forth. And that process will go on. There's no reason why it shouldn't go on. But one of the things that will help it go on will be if sensitive issues of health, be it in relation to women or men in our community, those sensitive issues are addressed in a very open, frank, unembarrassed but tasteful way. And that is precisely what this video does. And it is the sort of thing that should occur in relation to all other incidence of particular health challenges and problems. And the insights, the day-to-day advice that the video contains, the personal stories in the video and the reassuring messages, and most importantly of all, the overwhelmingly reassuring message and that is that prostate health is just another aspect of the health, is another aspect of caring for the human body and another aspect of understanding symptoms when they occur, being sensible enough to do something about them straight away, getting the best medical advice, understanding - as Tony Charlton said in the introduction of the video - understanding that there are a range of treatments available. I think all of that is something that will benefit not only the returned servicemen within our community, but of course we're particularly conscious of them in the lead up to Anzac Day, but also the entire male population particularly, but not only, those over the age of 60 or 65.

So when I was invited by those associated with the video, when I was invited to participate in this launch, I very readily agreed to do so because I wanted to associate myself, I wanted to associate my Government with a cause on open, sensible, recognition of and discussion not only of health issues generally but also of particular health challenges that effect men in our community. It's a measure of the intelligence and the sophistication of our community that such issues can be talked about in a sensible, open, yet completely tasteful and acceptable fashion.

I very genuinely congratulate those associated with the video. We invest as a community hundreds of millions, indeed, billions of dollars in treating illness, in treating ailments. We haven't in the past invested either enough resources or enough personal commitment to prevented health measures and this video makes some contribution to that. It also makes a contribution to relieving unnecessary anxiety in our community.

And for all of those reasons I'm delighted to be associated with the launch. I formally launch it. I congratulate those who put it together. And I especially congratulate and compliment those men and women who participated in the video because the vivid examples and stories always make a video like this effective. I wish all of those who participated well and I congratulate the Department for putting it together.

Thank you.