

31 August 1997

7

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP  
DOOSTOP INTERVIEW, KIRRIBILLI HOUSE  
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**

E&OE.....

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I know that Australians will be both saddened and shocked at the tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales. It removes (inaudible) a special fascination for things around the world. There are many Australians who will remember Diana's visits to this country over the years. The last of those visits was in 1996 in aid of the very esteemed Victor Chang Memorial Foundation.

On behalf of the Australian Government and the Australian people, I want to extend my very deep sympathy, particularly to her two young sons who have suffered the trauma of a marriage breakup and have now lost their mother at the very young age of 36. And to other members of the Royal Family it is a horrible and tragic accident and it will sadden many people around the world.

**JOURNALIST:**

Has the Australian Government (inaudible) Buckingham Palace?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well we are attending to all the official things that need to be done but I wanted to publicly express the sympathy of the people. It is a very tragic and untimely accident and of course our thoughts are particularly with her two sons. They are at a very young age and to lose their mother in these tragic circumstances, for any children of that age, it's a trauma. And I know the thoughts of Australians will be particularly with them.

**JOURNALIST:**

And are you considering going to the funeral yourself?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

We will make whatever appropriate arrangements that have to be taken as they arise. I don't know any of the details. There will be appropriate representation.

**JOURNALIST:**

What about your own memories, Prime Minister, of her, what are your own personal memories?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I met her on a couple of occasions some years ago. She was of course a very interesting personality. She devoted a lot of time in recent years to very worthy causes, particularly the worldwide campaign against the destructive force of landmines. Many of her spontaneous gestures in relation to people with AIDS, to people with leprosy, to people in hospital won her a lot of understanding and a lot of affection.

**JOURNALIST:**

What about the significance of Diana in terms of making the Australian...making the Royal Family contemporary in the 1990s?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I don't want to get into a retrospective at this stage, I don't think that is appropriate.

**JOURNALIST:**

Was she a warm person, personally?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I think she was a friendly person, yes, a very friendly person.

**JOURNALIST:**

(inaudible)

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I happened to have the radio on, the ABC, and I heard about it. Thankyou.

(Ends)