

## Transcript

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Compere: **RED SYMONS** Summary ID: **M00065414161**

Item: **INTERVIEW WITH PROF. GEOFF PRINCE, AUSTRALIAN MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES INSTITUTE, ABOUT THE BHP BILLITON FOUNDATION AND AMSI PROGRAM CHOOSE MATHS.**

**INTERVIEWEE: GEOFF PRINCE, AUSTRALIAN MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES INSTITUTE**

Audience:	Male 16+	Female 16+	All people
	63000	83000	148000

RED SYMONS: There's a prize for mathematics, there is. The Australian ... it will be called something, oh dear, BHP Billiton Foundation and AMSI has got a maths award. Might not be as big this year.

Professor Geoff Prince is the Director of the Australian Mathematical Sciences Institute. Good morning Professor.

GEOFF PRINCE: Good morning Red.

RED SYMONS: Yes, there'll be- do you ever wish you were Prince Geoff Professor?

GEOFF PRINCE: [Laughs] Well for a little while I was hoping to have been Sir Professor Geoff Prince, but that opportunity passed.

RED SYMONS: [Laughs] Righto. Tell me about the maths award.

- GEOFF PRINCE: So, we're undertaking this five-year program called Choose Maths to encourage girls and women to participate in maths study pathways and career pathways. There's not nearly enough women doing mathematics in Australia professionally, and BHP of course have a vested interest here because they want to increase their technical- professionally trained workforce. And they're obviously not getting that many women in there and they want to get a lot more in.
- RED SYMONS: Can I ask a question ...
- GEOFF PRINCE: Yes.
- RED SYMONS: ... how do you pursue mathematics- if you're not an academic, how do you pursue mathematics professionally?
- GEOFF PRINCE: Well most- actually most trained mathematicians do exactly that. So the number who are in academia versus the rest is small. You do it in all sorts of different ways. So, there are people, epidemiologist for example, statisticians, bureau meteorologists forecasts ...
- RED SYMONS: Are they all mathematicians?
- GEOFF PRINCE: ... almost all applied mathematicians. Next time you've got the weather guys in, you ask them. People in banks. I mean, there's so many people doing a risk management in the banking sector, in the finance sector.

RED SYMONS: Are you sure it's actuaries.

GEOFF PRINCE: Absolutely [indistinct].

RED SYMONS: Alright, righto.

GEOFF PRINCE: Right. So this Choose Maths program is a very significant program over a long period. It's five years, BHP have funded it to the tune of \$22 million, but of course they not giving all of it away in prize money. But the prizes, there will be annual prizes, and for teachers and for students. And for teachers the prizes, I think that the main prize each year is there are two, and \$10,000 each, and then eight runners up at 1000, and then there are student prizes, kids that are going to be making videos on the theme of maths is much more than just numbers. And the prizes for the students, so the best senior video is 2000, junior video is two, and then some runner up prizes after that.

RED SYMONS: But no sash?

GEOFF PRINCE: [Laughs] I'm sure we can arrange a sash.

RED SYMONS: [Laughing] No don't do that, no no, don't. It's so wrong.

GEOFF PRINCE: Yeah anyway. So we're really- inspiring teachers are just so important to kids in mathematics, and particularly important for girls. I've been doing this secret survey of my colleagues and PhD students and honours students and stuff over the years, every time I meet one of them, somebody new, and get into a

conversation, I deftly steer the conversation around to their maths experience at school, and they without exception over the years have all said there was at least one teacher at school who inspired them.

RED SYMONS: Oh yeah that's me. I'm one of them.

GEOFF PRINCE: Yeah that's right.

RED SYMONS: Yeah.

GEOFF PRINCE: So it is really important. And I'm the same, I mean I had two or three teachers during my high school period who were absolutely inspiring. So we want to encourage those teachers, especially the teachers who can inspire young women in schools.

RED SYMONS: Actually I've got to correct that. My teacher, my maths teacher didn't inspire me, he was more your cruel taskmaster type. Which- and there's nothing wrong with that.

GEOFF PRINCE: I think those days have gone haven't they? Cruel taskmaster.

RED SYMONS: And you ask yourself why people aren't going into mathematics.

GEOFF PRINCE: [Laughs] I see, okay, well yeah, we could pursue that. I can see a survey there.

RED SYMONS: Yeah, by the way you know your secret survey?

GEOFF PRINCE: Yes?

RED SYMONS: That you've been conducting for some time.

GEOFF PRINCE: Yes.

RED SYMONS: Not secret anymore.

GEOFF PRINCE: [Laughs] No.

RED SYMONS: You'll never be able to do it again. Alright. How do you apply, how do you get in?

GEOFF PRINCE: You can see all the stuff online.

RED SYMONS: Yep.

GEOFF PRINCE: So the stuff- sorry, the nominations have opened ...

RED SYMONS: [Interrupts] You don't know do you, you haven't got the piece of paper ...

GEOFF PRINCE: [Interrupts] I do, I've got it in front of me. The closing date is 11 July 2016 ...

RED SYMONS: [Interrupts] Yeah yeah yeah, we just need the website.

GEOFF PRINCE: The website.

RED SYMONS: [Choosemathsawards.org.au](http://Choosemathsawards.org.au).

GEOFF PRINCE: Well look, if you do something like that, if you do AMSI and then Choose Maths, or if you just go to AMSI.org.au you'll get it all.

RED SYMONS: Oh you've confused- I had it really simple. And you've ...

GEOFF PRINCE: [Indistinct].

RED SYMONS: Just ChooseMaths, one word. Just type ...

GEOFF PRINCE: Yeah no, two words, it's two, don't do one. It's two words. Choose Maths, choose [indistinct] ...

RED SYMONS: [Talks over] Oh no you'll get- it'll take you somewhere else, you'll end up in Russia with a wife [laughs]. Alright, thank you Professor.

GEOFF PRINCE: My pleasure, see you.

RED SYMONS: Mine too.

\* \* END \* \*

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