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PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT - ABC TV (NORTHERN TERRITORY) PROGRAM: TERRITORY TRACKS

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HOSTED BY RUTH DEXTER

Well last week also saw the visit of the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, to strike the first major blow in the Labor Party's election campaign in the Northern Territory. Geoff Adlide reports:

GA: A bulldozer clearing the way for a Labor victory in the Territory - at least that's the hope of its driver, Prime Minister Bob Hawke. The Prime Minister spent the first day of his national campaign here in the Territory on the hustings in support of Labor Member, John Reeves. Not surprisingly he was selling his Government by displaying some of the benefits to the Territory since Labor came to power. Namely, the \$90 million upgrading of the Darwin Airport and the several hundred million dollar Tindal Air Force Base. This is Bob Hawke's second visit in less than a year. Last time he was here to campaign for the Territory elections, in which the Labor Party was devastated. Many of the issues are still much the same, with uranium, land rights and the like, so how does he believe he'll turn the tide of Labor Party fortunes.

BH: All our research shows that the people of the Territory have a different perspective than they bring to bear on a Northern Territory election than what they do when they talk about Federal elections. We're encouraged by the indication that the people of the Territory firstly recognise what we've done for Australia, secondly particularly recognise the fact that we've put in about \$1.8 billion in our two budgets to the future of the Territory. We've given about a 12% increase in tax repayment money to the Territory as compared with about 6% to the states, and thirdly, they recognise the great job that John Reeves has done in prodding us. As a member of the Government he can do that. And I think all these things will go in our favour.

GA: But Mr Everingham is a tough opponent.

BH: Oh yes, of course I can see that he'll be a tough opponent. I mean, I'm a realist in politics, he's well known, but I also recognise the great job that John Reeves has done for the Territory and I believe that the Territorians will be sensible about that. We're not now talking about Mr Everingham, the Chief Minister, but we're talking about someone to be in Canberra either as a member of Government, returned to power as Mr Everingham says it will be, someone to be there directly and intimately involved in that, or someone over there on the Opposition.

GA: If Mr Everingham does win, will the Territory suffer, or will the Government be less responsive to the Territory's needs?

BH: You see, it's not a question of.....I think my sort of attitude to life is well known. I'm not a vindictive person, I don't operate like

that, but it's just a fact of life that if you've got a person that's a member of your party, part of the whole process, and in the nature of things he can just wander in to see you, because he is your own party, and he can wander into ministers' offices, he's an intimate colleague of them. That person has got, just in the nature of things, a much greater capacity to get the view across than someone in the Opposition. It's true whether we're in Government or the other people are in Government that members from seats and areas of the Government have a better access to and capacity to influence their own Government than they have if they are in Opposition just as a fact of life.

RD: Geoff Adlidge talking to Prime Minister, Bob Hawke.

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