



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH JOHN JOST, RADIO 3LO
21 AUGUST 1989

E & OE - PROOF ONLY

JOST: On the programme today Australia's Prime Minister Mr Bob Hawke and Mr Hawke is sitting down in front of me right now. Good Morning Prime Minister.

P.M.: Good Morning John

JOST: Well thanks for joining us.

P.M.: My pleasure. Sorry I'm late but there was a bit of a traffic jam.

JOST: I know it is not easy. I understand that. If I didn't leave home to get in here at 6am I'd probably miss it myself.

P.M.: I was just wondering as I was listening to your programme whether you dedicated that first song to the pilots.

JOST: Well I will ask you about the pilots?

P.M.: I thought you might.

JOST: First up ... not so much about the pilots, about the tactics of it. I suppose it would be traditional would it not to apply for a bans cause and then I suppose if the Pilots Federation breaches that clause to fine or have them fined for contempt. Why is the Government suggesting that the pilots be put out of the system? What makes them so different?

P.M.: Because we have a situation now where the whole wage fixing process in the country is operating under the centralised direction of the Industrial Relations Commission and the wage and salary earners of Australia in general have submitted to that system in a way which has effected the capacity to create one and a half million new jobs. These people are saying well we are not going to be part of that system. And therefore it is appropriate, as the Commissioners put to them, well you make your mind up. Be in it or not. If you're out of it then quite clearly with the

approbation of the whole of the organized workforce then all the processes of the law are properly available to be used against them. Now let me make it clear as I did in my press conference yesterday John. I don't want to see that. I'm not trying to push them out of the system. I desperately would hope that they would make the decision to stay in and to stop regarding themselves as something different. This mythology that pilots are trying to create about themselves that somehow they are unique because they get up there and fly an aeroplane that somehow not only are they sort of physically above us all but in other ways. It is about time they in a sense came back to earth.

JOST: They compare themselves to judges.

P.M.: Well why? Why do they compare themselves to judges? What in the name of anything that starts to make sense have they got in common with judges. Look lets get down to the facts. Lets stop this mythology that pilots are something different. I mean in terms - what are they? They are people that fly an aeroplane. Great responsibility. But so have bus drivers got great responsibility.

JOST: Pilots do do exams every year. They have quite a high standard of qualification and they have to maintain those qualifications.

P.M.: Look, of course they have to have qualifications, but in terms of actually learning to fly, to become a pilot, it is not something flash. It's a relatively easy thing to do. There is no mystery about flying an aeroplane. I learnt to fly an aeroplane when I was at Oxford and flew an aeroplane.

JOST: What sort of aeroplane did you fly?

P.M.: They were chipmunks, and I tell you what. You compare these -

JOST: Hawke and the Chipmunk.

PM: Hawke and the Chipmunk. Yes, had a lot of fun too. And of course that's a great thing about this profession. People love it, they want to fly, they get great pleasure out of flying. It is exhilarating. They want to get their exhilaration away from their exhilaration as to what they are worth. I mean -

JOST: Do you think they have been overpaid for 20 years?

P.M.: Well I am not saying that they have been overpaid for for 30 years. But what I'm certainly saying is that they are not worth the 30% increase now.

JOST: Right.

P.M.: That is a nonsense.

JOST: Well just on the tactics you are using, because it is a little bit reminiscent I suppose in the class of action as say the dollar sweeps case.

P.M.: Well what about it?

JOST: Well it is just interesting to me that you take that route. It may well encourage employees, or employers I should say in other industries or other areas to do the same thing that you may not necessarily like.....

P.M.: Well I don't encourage that at all. What I'm saying is that we have got a Conciliation and Arbitration system which is working well in the interests of all Australians. There's been wage restraint exercised by people considerably less well placed than these greedy pilots. Ordinary working men and women and many of them I might say who've had to work a lot harder to get their qualifications than pilots. I mean you look at a trades person. They do their 4 or 5 years apprenticeship. They have not got the glory and glamour of pilots. but if you look at it objectively in terms of the training that these people do to acquire their capacity they do relatively much more than pilots do. And yet because these people are up in the air with this glory of flying people around they suddenly say they are entitled to another 30%. I mean it is a nonsense. I mean we've got, look at the fellows who are flying in the Air Force....

JOST: Judges.

P.M.: But why? Why do you compare a pilot with a judge?

JOST: I'm not. I'm pointing out that judges are....

P.M.: Judges have exercised enormous salary restraint, enormous salary restraint. They are not part of the general wage and salary system. They haven't had an award with all the rights and obligations of a Conciliation and Arbitration system. Judges haven't had. These people had the rights and the obligations of the Conciliation and Arbitration system. Now they want to say alright we're out. O.K. if they're out they'll cop all that goes with being out.

JOST: Could I please put something to you on this question of people who are on higher salaries and I suppose pilots are a sort of a classic because they fit the band of individual or the band of salary that I'm thinking of. Those people in those salaries who sort of have a statutory limitation on increases are the ones that would have depended I suppose or would have hoped that the marginal rate of tax would come down from 49 to 39 because that would sort of somehow or other make up - that would be their sort of wages tax write-off for exercising restraint. And I'm thinking of people like of judges

P.M.: Well there's been a movement for judges and so there should have been because in respect of judges you had the situation that the ranks from which they come, that's the barristers who by and large are very well paid.

JOST: And you've got to get good Judges.

P.M.: And you've got to get good judges.

JOST: And who want's to be a good - who, one of those great barristers want to go to the bench if they're going to loose so much money.

P.M.: Yes well that's obviously partly true and we've had to take account of that. I think the community would say they want a good judicial system and there is no discernable objection to a situation that people who are going to be there in that important position - judges - shouldn't have got a significant salary increase. As I say, they are not part of the award system. They're not people who are there getting their rights and their obligations under the system. The pilots are.

JOST: Can I just -

P.M.: Just the basic point that annoys all hell out of me is the way in which these people are trying to glorify themselves because they fly an aeroplane. And may I say for less than 10 hours a week do they fly the damn thing. I mean your listeners understand, the average hours that these people are actually at the stick is about eight hours a week.

JOST: But you could blame management for being inefficient on that front couldn't you. It's not the pilots' fault.

P.M.: Well, what you can blame is the fact that over a period of years the pilots have exercised their muscles and at one stage or another, managements have caved in. Not because they have wanted to but they thought they haven't had any alternative. Well they've got an alternative now. I mean the pilots have got to understand, and I hope they do stay within the system at 4 o'clock this afternoon, but there's not going to be a cave in by the airlines or by the Government. They're going to start to realise -

JOST: Would you use the Government's VIP fleet if the -

P.M.: Well just wait and see what we'll use.

JOST: It's going to be boots and all will it?

P.M.: All of us John are the product of our history. All of us. Now these people are the product of a history where in the past where they've gone in and had a fight, pretty soon either Ansett or TAA as it was have caved in. Now that's their history and that's the sort of fight they think they will go into if they go on with this. Well let me tell them its a different fight they're going into.

JOST: What about the Beville workers? What if they push the wage decision forward? They could sort of tip the whole box and dice over too.

P.M.: Look, we've been going for over six years now under the Accord and as I've said I'm getting a bit sick and tired of people saying the Accord is finished, it's all over, what if these do, what if this do that. I think you've got the situation where you've got some very, very good people on the union side, you've some very good people on the employers side. I think of Bert Evans and the people around him in the metal trades employers, and you've got the ACTU. They with the Commission, with the very wise guidance of the Industrial Relations Commission, they'll work it out.

JOST: Just like to ask you a couple of quick ones? Well actually about that accord though. It is a source of constant amazement to ... look at it, how it does endure -

P.M.: But why should it be?

JOST: Well, it is interesting. I will tell you why. Because for instance say at one stage I think when it first came down - I mean we have had various remodelings of it. We've had full indexation promised. We've had quarterly wage adjustments promised under it. A whole lot of things which haven't been delivered. But I just - the point about the

question is this. Is one when you are in Government you are literally learning on the job and you find you make a deal like that, you make a deal like an Accord one or Accord two and you've literally got to scrap...

P.M.: Look, look go back to the beginning. I'm now talking as one of the proud fathers of the Accord, the whole concept. And what did I say at the beginning? I said this will be a flexible instrument. I mean you can't in life, unless you want to be a real whacker, say look here, I've got something which is absolutely unchangeable. I mean in the areas of human and organizational ... I've suddenly found some instrument which is absolutely inflexible when you are dealing with the a relations between groups. But it's the concept, the concept was a very simple one. That is that you are much more likely - trade unions, organized workers and employers - to get the achievement of your mutual interests if you co-operate, talk together, than if you have a head on confrontation. Now its worked out. I mean on the side of employers their profitability has increased. On the side of workers they've got, as I say, a million and a half new jobs. It's a rate of job creation four times faster than it was before and -

JOST: They've lost on their wages ... though.

P.M.: Yes but we have delivered on the Accord in terms of the massive improvements in the social wage. Look at what's been delivered in terms of health care, pensions, superannuation, education, all the things we promised we would deliver on. So there has been that flexibility. And I said in 1983 when we delivered the Accord, I said this will work because it is in the interests of all the people concerned that it shall work. There will be flexibility. That's what there's been.

JOST: Can I ask you a couple of quick ones?
Quick comments really. Live sheep exports to Saudi Arabia.
What's going on there?

P.M.: Its a very disturbing situation. You've had last year a level of exports, about a quarter of a billion dollars. As far as I can ascertain as I have been briefed by listening to Mr Kerin, the shipments have not been of a kind that can in any objective way be not approved. We have therefore arranged for a high level delegation to go there and try to get this thing sorted out. I believe that it can be because the reputation of the Australian farmers and suppliers is high.

JOST: Well our sheep have pox, they have got bluetongue.

P.M.: Well wait a minute.

JOST: I mean this is what the Saudi's are saying.

P.M.: Yes, that's what they are saying. I'm glad you added that. They are saying that. What is being said by our people here is that that's not the case.

JOST: And they pull the plug on a ...while he was there?

P.M.: We'll we've been unable to unload the sheep elsewhere there in the Middle East but, I mean let me say this. If in fact what they are alleging was true then it would have to be dealt with. But the thing is to get the facts sorted out.

JOST: It is obviously not true. I mean have they got some sort of internal problem the Saudis?

P.M.: Well I don't know. This is what we are going to find out John.

JOST: Yes it is a fascinating one. At the weekend there was a push from within the ALP to revive the idea of a referendum over the environment?

P.M.: Yes

JOST: Does that idea appeal to you?

P.M.: I saw that reference. Let's see as we go. What we have discovered, painfully, in this country is that if you haven't got bipartisan support you haven't got much chance of getting a referendum carried. What we've said to the Opposition, if you're dinkum you would indicate your support for this and we could go ahead with great confidence then. So just let's see how this thing develops.

JOST: If you could get a situation -

P.M.: May I just add to this. The fundamental difference between ourselves and the Opposition. We are dinkum about the environment. We don't believe that the Federal Government should not be prepared to override the States in certain circumstances. The Opposition say no, no interference with State rights, which means in the end if you adhered to that position that the level of Australian standards would be equal to the worst of the States. I don't like that.

JOST: Well look another one. It's a long way down the track but at the moment we have had, in the aftermath of the Fitzgerald Inquiry, the suggestion that there should be one vote one value in Queensland. Obviously that may not come to fruition, the desire or wish as expressed by Mr Fitzgerald. Does that tempt you to have another go at one vote one value if Queensland won't clean itself up?

P.M.: Well, not a temptation. But I go back to the point I just made. I think the Australian people need to ask why the conservative parties in this country, the Liberals and the National Party, that unholy marriage, why are they opposed to the concept of one vote one value? If the Liberals would say yes we would support that we would do it like a shot.

JOST: Is it possible that you might find yourself asking them if there was intransigence on behalf of the National Party

P.M.: Well, I don't know. There is no evidence that there is any principle on the part of the Liberals at all. As far as the National Party - well what a joke they have become. The National Party is just rural warfare incorporated.

JOST: Yes well look I tell you there was a bit of warfare it seems to me between Treasury and the Reserve Bank?

P.M.: Is there? Well inform me John.

JOST: You have to interpret the Reserve Bank - it's a pretty delphic body as you know.

P.M.: Well I have been on it. I was a member of the Board of the Reserve Bank for about seven years.

PM: ... don't have any misconceptions about that.

JOST: And no doubt you will correct my interpretation. But there does appear to be a question in whether high interest rates will be enough to slow the economy coming from the Reserve Bank. They feel there should be more done.

P.M.: Look, when you are talking about an economy which is growing very strongly and you're using monetary policy together with tight fiscal and wages policy to slow things down, it is not a question of competition or anything like that. Economists and commentators, whether they are in the Reserve Bank, the Treasury, the private banking system, the academic world -

JOST: Of course they argue. I accept that.

P.M.: They are differences of opinion.

JOST: I accept that.

P.M.: It's quite legitimate to have a perception expressed, whether it's from the Reserve Bank or elsewhere, it might take a little bit longer than some people think. What's strange about that? I mean I doubt if you would find, if I got you a dozen economists, whether you would get anything other than about six or seven different opinions. If they said what week is it going to slow down, or is it going to be definite that interest rates start coming down. Out of a dozen economists you would probably get ten different opinions.

JOST: What you would say, I mean I could only agree with, because I'm aware that you yourself for instance rather like this idea of some sort of concessions on the interest and tax front.

P.M.: Now, wait a minute, you are in a very jumpy position this morning John, I mean jumping to positions. What I liked was the idea of examining it. Now don't give me this business. I mean you've got no basis saying I like the idea. The one thing I liked was when something was there on the table, which prima facie could have some merit, what I demanded was that it be examined. We examined it and on balance it was certainly not the right thing to do.

JOST: Did the suggestion come to you from the Reserve Bank?

P.M.: No. About some decision to, some proposal to -

JOST: Interest deductability on, you know, the non-inflation -

P.M.: But, you're talking about the mortgage adjustment first of all, now you're talking about the inflation adjustment.

JOST: No, no, I'm really talking about the, I'm talking about the tax break on interest rates.

P.M.: The inflation adjustment for interest on both sides of the ledger?

JOST: Yes.

P.M.: The receipts and outlays.

JOST: Yes.

P.M.: No, on that one, that didn't come from the Reserve Bank to me.

JOST: Cos it would appear that the Reserve Bank likes ...

P.M.: Let me be quite clear. Was one of the fellows on my staff, an economist on my staff - a very good mind - he said you know this is worth having a look at. Boy did we have a look at it. We had a look at it and so did Treasury and dear oh dear. I mean you heard what I said on the Sunday Programme three weeks ago. I made the assertion they will not go to the election with this one. And how would you like ten dollars worth of that?

JOST: O.K. Well listen, a quick question about this Melbourne-Sydney very fast train.

P.M.: Yes.

JOST: Do you support that?

P.M.: Yes.

JOST: It's interesting to me. It was suggested and Jim Kennan confirmed it down here that the promoters of that scheme would be interested in setting up a couple of cities along the track, somewhere down the line between Melbourne and Sydney. Now that, I mean it would be a huge decentralization exercise and no doubt a huge capital expense and it would probably involve a lot of help from governments.

P.M. Clearly the concept that's involved by the developers is that they would have access under legislation by governments of NSW and Victoria to land which would be able to be developed. And this would form part of the basis under which they would finance the development.

JOST: Sure.

P.M.: That's been made quite clear from the beginning. Now as far as the governments are concerned though the developers have made it quite clear that they are not looking for, do not expect financial support from governments. My support from the Commonwealth Government which is very firm support -

JOST: I was really thinking in terms of co-operation, because if you -

P.M.: It would require co-operation yes for sure.

JOST: Because if you were to create a city and if so what sort of cities are they talking about?

P.M.: You are talking about developments which will make it very, very much more attractive for people to buy land on these routes at very very much lesser prices and in more congenial environments than are continually crowding out in Sydney and in Melbourne.

JOST: So you see the cities feeding Sydney and Melbourne with workers or with their own work base.

P.M.: It will work in two ways. They will, you will be able to provide commuters who will want to go into Sydney or Melbourne. But also I see these things developing as economic centres in their own right. It will be a combination of both.

JOST: It's a pretty big, it would be an enormous project wouldn't it. I mean I can't...

P.M.: Of course it is but you know what the world is about.

JOST: I'm not criticising.

P.M.: I know you are not....

JOST: I'm just interested in a few facts on it, because all we've heard is, we've heard a few environmental arguments...

P.M.: I'm not implying John that you are criticising it but I just find I'm a little bit surprised when people say isn't this a big thing. What the world is about, what progress is about is big developments.

JOST: Sure, and I would imagine that's the sort of development that if you are going to develop that's the sort of thing Federal Government ought be getting into.

P.M.: Absolutely.

JOST: But, its interesting to know sort of city, what sort of vision you would have for it?

P.M.: Well, I have told you the vision. Its a vision that we have a city now of Sydney of about three and a half to three and a quarter million people bursting at the seams, by nature limited on the one side by the ocean, on the other side by the mountains. Limited in terms of its capacity for proper expansion. Melbourne, relatively much better placed but still a very very large city. People who want to be able to get land at a reasonable price in congenial conditions. I see the exciting vision of an opening up of a whole corridor along the eastern states which is going to provide the opportunity for an expansion of our economy and the development of better living conditions for hundreds of thousands of our people.

JOST: Mr Hawke thank you very much, but just temporarily, because I have been given approval in another way that you don't know about to keep you here for another 10 minutes after the news break.

P.M.: That's beaut, because I always enjoy it.

JOST: Mr Hawke, looking down the track a bit what do you think your major difficulties will be in the next federal election?

P.M.: Um -

JOST: Apart from fixing a date?

P.M.: No I don't have any difficulty about that. That will come easily. In a sense I think one of the major problems is going to be complacency. I think the Australian people are increasingly coming to understand the correctness of the Governments economic policies, the commitment we have to making the tough decisions and not just take the easy way out. They're certainly getting increasing evidence of the internal bitterness and division, hatreds, lack of policy and direction of the Opposition. I think one of the things I'll have to guard against with myself to some extent, although not much there but with others, will be a sense of complacency. We have got to keep on making the, at times, tough decisions because we can't afford to have a level of economic activity bringing in imports at a level which we can't afford to pay for and earn by our exporting activity. Now, provided we keep our nerve and keep making those decisions we will be respected by the Australian people and we will win the election.

JOST: In your election campaign though you would have underline that fact. I mean you would be selling them a hard diet, wouldn't you?

P.M.: Well not just a hard diet. Go back to 1987. People, as I have said before, told me I couldn't win then because we had tough policies there and I said well I have a greater respect for the Australian people than most of the commentators seem to have. If you tell them as it is then they understand that. You say its just hard diet. Yes it is hard in some respects but it's not a bad story we've got to tell in so many ways. I mean you show me a period in Australian history when we have been creating jobs at the rate we've created them in our six and a half years in Government - twice as fast as the rest of the world. Where in terms of our education system when we came to office, the legacy of the Libs, only 36% of our kids staying in the education system. Now its 58% and rising. Where we have had these historic achievements in terms of -

JOST: What proportion of that group will get to tertiary education?

P.M.: Well that's rising, which is reflected by the fact that we have created over 200% more tertiary places than was created under our predecessors. In this next four year period we will be creating new places which will be equivalent to the size of Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney Universities. So that's to take account of more people that are staying on in the tertiary system as well.

JOST: I take it that it's fairly easier for those people who graduate from tertiary institutions to get jobs than it would be say if those kids had not gone there.

PM: That's right, yes. I mean all the evidence shows it. The more our young people are trained and educated, whether it be in the secondary, the technical or the university atmosphere the greater is their chance of employment.

JOST: I'd just like to whip through a few things with you. Last week you suggested you might leave the Labor Party at the election after the next election. You also said Paul Keating would eventually be Prime Minister. Was that just one option?

PM: Why, do you think I might lead it into three elections after this one?

JOST: You might decide to go -

PM: I'm not. Don't let that get any ...

JOST: Right, we've settled that. Well it just seems that Mr Keating obviously gets frustrated with his lot and he's likely to get frustrated again. No matter what his good intentions are now he's going to get frustrated within six months probably after the election.

PM: (inaudible)

JOST: John Dawkins ...

PM: You fellas amuse me. Paul and I make it quite clear what the situation is. I heard you and Michelle going on ... about it this morning.

JOST: It's fair enough though because a lot of people -

PM: ... Sure it's fair enough. It's a lovely free democracy. If you and Michelle and all the others want to play games about -

JOST: Paul Keating was playing games this time last year wasn't he?

PM: He got a little bit frustrated. The fact of life is that we fixed that up very quickly and as you will find both Paul and myself say our working relationship has never been better. Now that's a fact so if you want to play around and conjure up ideas and thoughts ... say that's beaut, that's what our information free democracy is about.

JOST: Do you think it'd be right then for him to be Treasurer for ten years?

PM: You wouldn't have a better Treasurer. But I'm not suggesting that he needs to be for ten years. You see Paul enjoys being Treasurer. He would certainly enjoy being Prime Minister. I'm making the point he does enjoy being Treasurer. I've made it clear to Paul that if he'd wanted to or ... to try some other portfolio of course he could. That was in no way wanting to push him. On the contrary because I reckon he's such a great Treasurer. But in fairness to him I have in the past raised ... and did he want to think about it. He makes the point that apart from the Prime Ministership there's no other portfolio that really grabs him like Treasurer that's understandable.

JOST: You are satisfied that if you do go your full term next time that you won't be costing Australia the next best ... Prime Minister?

PM: Sure, sure.

JOST: Right. Next time around if you win what reforms are left to you? What do you do? What have you got left in you as a leader of this country?

PM: Well, you don't change goal posts and say after this election I'm going to get a new vision, a new set of visions. I've been amused by some of the commentators who say well what's the vision? We had our vision when we came to office in '83 and that vision put as simply as I can was an Australia which would be - remember what the three 'r's were when I was in Opposition for that brief period? The three 'r's were reconciliation, recovery and reconstruction. That was the Hawke concept on which the election of '83 was fought. That was a vision. We had to be reconciled as a nation. We were in conflict one with the other. The Accord and the negotiations that we carry on constantly the apparatus that we have for consultation with all the community is involved in the process of reconciliation. We had to have the immediate recovery from the worst recession in 50 years and then reconstruction and that reconstruction was a reconstruction not only of our economy but of our social welfare system and of our place in the world. And that's what we are about and it's going to be really a continuation of that reconstruction of Australia to make our economy more dynamic more internationally competitive it's going to be a continuing reconstruction of our social welfare system so that it's more targeted upon those in need that's what we will be doing and will increase it.

JOST: Are you sorry that you didn't get into say-micro-economic reforms quicker?

P.M.: We did! I mean, what sort of micro-economic reform do we have in the financial system. I mean the most revolutionary reform..

JOST: I'm thinking about the transport system..

P.M.: Oh yes, but you said, your question was are you sorry you didn't get into micro-economic reform quicker and I'm saying in answer to that question my darling John, that we dived right into micro-economic reform with the most fundamental way that had ever been done.

JOST: O.K. alright, you de-regulated the financial system idea Prime Minister and I acknowledge that but there are other harder ones aren't there and the labor area particular the water fronts one of them?

P.M.: Yes, well I'm not dodging, I'll come to that. But let me.. don't give the impression that this one that we did in the beginning of bringing in 16 foreign banks, de-regulating the financial market and floating the dollar, that was just an easy piece of cake. I mean if it was that easy that the champions of de-regulation and free enterprise under Fraser and Howard and Peacock for 7 years hadn't had the guts or the wit or the imagination to do it that's how easy it was. So, sure in regard to the Transport Industry, we've already de-regulated the Airline Industry into the two Airline Policy and on the area of the water front and the Maritime Industry what we have done, is to recognise the reality that the other people dodged for 7 years, they did nothing. What we've done now for a period is to say, bring the parties together, get independent advice as well and we are now right in the process of getting the form on both the water front and in the Maritime Industry and that will be something significant that's never been done before.

JOST: We've got two minutes left. I'd like to get on with personal matter or semi personal. Your son Steven Hawke he has written a book about the Nukenbar Confrontation between the Aborigines and the oil companies and I think you are going to launch it.

P.M: No! you are wrong there mate.

JOST: You're not?

P.M.: No

JOST: Are you proud of him?

P.M.: Yes of course I am. By the way Manning Clarke is going to launch it.

JOST: Oh Manning is.... Well it's just and I will be talking to him in a couple of weeks and I just thought and wondered if you have read the manuscript or anything like that?

P.M.: I've got the.... it was Hazel gave it to me on Friday night and I've started to read it.

JOST: It seems to be a pretty good book?

P.M.: He's a pretty good bloke!

JOST: What sort of... I mean I know that you don't often get asked questions about this or if you do you don't often talk about it, but he has had an interesting life and he has clearly reacted in a way, he has been conscious of you being Prime Minister and he has headed off... he has made his own life somewhere else.

P.M.: And yes I am very proud of him.

JOST: I gather though that you are a lot closer to your family these days?

P.M.: I have always been close in terms of love and affection. One of the problems in my life is that I wasn't as physically close to them as I should have been and at times could have been. I was pursuing a, and not just pursuing, and just involved in a career as ... for the ACTU which just involved the constantly long hours and then as President as the ACTU and then going into Parliament and through all that process I was away from them a lot. I think it is true to say, John, which I think in a sense you are hinting about ... is now a closeness between us all.

JOST: (inaudible)

JOST: I'm just wondering if they're influencing you as sort of a politician.

PM: Too right they influence me.

JOST: Don Chipp went from a right winger to a sort of a radical Liberal.

PM: If any father in these days in these days I think whether he is Prime Minister or whatever he is, ... radio interviewer, he is not influenced by his or her kids is a very strange person. I mean because... one of the things about life people will not understand it as we come to the end of the 20th century, what a different world it was when we were growing up. I mean, in those days kids were to be seen and not heard type of thing. But now it is different, kids are both seen and are to be heard. They are not prepared and rightly not prepared just to take the world as it is and say will you wait until you grow up and you may be a radio interviewer or a politician then you do something about it. They rightly say it is our world and we want to be heard.

JOST: Is Steven pestering you about Aboriginal affairs?

P.M.: Steven doesn't pester me! He will occasionally let me know of a view but he is not a pesterer.

JOST: Has he put it to you that that Aboriginal Treaty should be ...

P.M.: We've had a yarn about these things but its not in any constant sense.

JOST: How is it going anyway?

P.M.: Well Gerry Hand will be coming up with proposals about a structure of consultation both on the Aboriginal side and non Aboriginal side in this Budget. There have been funds allocated for that purpose and both the Aboriginal side and the non Aboriginal side expressing the view that they want to be able to work through this thing slowly. It is not something that is going to be able to be just kicked in ---- being overnight. It has my full enthusiastic support at a pace which those involved think is most appropriate.

JOST: Thanks very much for coming in today!

P.M.: John it is always a great pleasure to with you.

JOST: Well it was good of you to stay on that extra 15 minutes.

P.M.: Pleasure John!

JOST: Thank you that was Prime Minister of Australia Mr Bob Hawke.

ends