



PRIME MINISTER

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E & OE - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: ... the Opposition leader ... got through the dress rehearsal for an election. Are we seeing the same sort of thing from you now, I mean with your interviews today, television -

PM: Remember there was a Budget last week? We made arrangements that we would be out selling the Budget the week after. That's what I'm doing. I must say the Budget has gone over so well and been so broadly accepted that John didn't ... to want to ask any questions about that. But that's really what this is about. We made the decision that we'd spend the week afterwards selling the Budget. That's what this is about.

JOURNALIST: Senator Ray has said overnight that it could be as early as November because the Opposition has nothing going for it at this time. You seemed to reinforce that view about the Opposition's policies in there.

PM: I didn't say anything about dates. Senator Ray is not saying anything that I haven't been saying very vigorously for some time about the condition of the Opposition. Just look objectively at it. We've had a situation where just relatively a few weeks ago both of the Opposition parties threw out their leaders, Mr Howard and Mr Sinclair. They've thrown them out. Why? In the case of Mr Peacock because they thought he had substantial new policies? No. Because they thought he might be able to sell the Opposition a bit better. In the case of Mr Sinclair, well why? I mean they just got rid of him. Now what's happening is you've got Mr Sinclair saying what? That the Opposition is not fit to govern. Well, this is just proving what I've been saying for a long time. All they are about is power. They've got no policies. Mr Blunt is saying they won't really produce their policies until I announce the election. Great stuff. No policies, no principles, no leadership. That's nothing new but it's not going to send me racing into an election.

JOURNALIST: You haven't had to do much selling in terms of the Budget. So have you been testing the waters in terms of an election, testing opinion?

PM: No. Why don't you listen to the answer I've given. I said before the Budget was brought down we'd made arrangements to go out and have this period selling it. That was an arrangement that was made. It's sensible and it just happens to be the case that it is such a good Budget and so broadly received that when I come on these programs it seems to be taken for granted that it's a great Budget and they'd rather talk about other things. That suits me.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, the legal action against pilots. How soon would you expect that to happen after the 4 o'clock deadline?

PM: Well I think that would happen quite quickly. But let me say, I repeat Heather that we want them to stay in the system. I don't want any interpretation of my indication of the tough action that's there if they don't stay in to say that's what I want to happen. I want them to stay in and to be part of the system and stop going on with this idea that because they're up there flying aeroplanes that somehow they're not only above the earth but they're above everyone else. They are not. They are people who have a skill which is nothing which uniquely puts them apart from anyone else in terms of their training. If you look at tradespersons, tradespersons have in a sense longer, tougher training than learning to fly an aeroplane. They are already very well rewarded for working at the stick less than ten hours a week. Now it's about time they sort of in terms of themselves came down to earth and realised that they are not going to glorify themselves above the rest of the wage and salary earners of this country.

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