



# PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP  
DOORSTOP, RAAF FAIRBAIRN, CANBERRA, 14 NOVEMBER 1995**

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**PM:** A remark on the Lawrence Royal Commission - we only have at this stage Premier Court's summary of the report, and I would like to read the full report. But I think we have only got to regard the result as very dubious - open to doubt as indeed Commissioner Marks said it would be in one of his public statements. He also said at that time of that statement, that the terms of reference had turned out to be fairly restrictive, he said it was "part of my training not to make assumptions on half the evidence". In other words, he was saying that it was restrictive, the evidence and the findings would be open to doubt. Well, they are open to doubt if what we believe to be the findings are an accurate reflection of what Mr Court has said, and I just simply make the point that it was a political Royal Commission set up by the Opposition, by John Howard and Richard Court for the most base political motives, it has not a shred of integrity to it in the drawing up of the Royal Commission's terms of reference, it's been a charade from front to back, and it was condemned by the Royal Commissioner in terms of process. And we can only agree with the Royal Commissioner's own observation that it would be open to doubt, and therefore I regard the whole process as dubious and worthless.

**J:** Do you retain confidence in Dr Lawrence?

**PM:** I have complete confidence in her, all these claims and counter-claims - it's always seemed to me that her version of these things are fairly clear anyway, but the key evidence was given by Mr Marquet, the Clerk of the Upper House, who said it would have been improper for any Premier or Member of the Executive Government to stop a Member of Parliament presenting a petition. Like me as Prime Minister stopping a Member of Parliament presenting a petition in the House of Representatives or the Senate. That was the knockout evidence, but of course, it came late and the sequencing of the witnesses was such

that all of the very notable evidence was given by people who are giving evidence against Carmen Lawrence. So, she has my complete support and I'm sure the support of everyone in the Government, and our sympathy for having to go through such a process where we have seen the grossest form of personal abuse at the hands of the Liberal Party. A \$6 million Royal Commission arrayed against one woman.

J: ...(inaudible)...

PM: I haven't seen them - the findings - in detail.

ends.