



# PRIME MINISTER

22 October 1996

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
THE HON. JOHN HOWARD MP  
DOORSTOP INTERVIEW - ADELAIDE**

**E & OE**.....

**JRNLS:**

Prime Minister, what went wrong today in New York?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I don't know. I'm disappointed. It's too early to have had an assessment from the Department of Foreign Affairs which I have asked for, to explain the difference between the predictions that came out of the New York mission and the actual vote. But it won't alter our commitment to the UN and of course Australia played a major role, remarked upon by President Clinton, in security UN support for the comprehensive test ban treaty. Often in these cases nations which haven't been so often non permanent members in the past, we've had four goes in the past, Portugal in the past only one and Sweden only two. That may have been a factor but really it's too early at this stage to know precisely why there was a difference between the fairly confident predictions of the mission and the actual outcome.

**JRNLS:**

Is there anything more you could have done, do you think?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I don't think so. Bear in mind, this was very much a joint effort. It was started by Gareth Evans when he was Foreign Minister and the strategy of twinning Australia and Sweden was in fact devised by Gareth Evans. He co-operated and I thank him for that. Malcolm

Fraser was involved in it. In no way was it a Liberal Party or a Labor Party exercise. It was an Australian exercise. I haven't seen any evidence that more could have been done. I am naturally disappointed but it's too early to sort of try and extrapolate reasons.

**JRNLSST:**

Mr Howard, is this some source of embarrassment for Australia?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No, no it's not an embarrassment when you lose a vote. It's disappointing but it's not an embarrassment. We've been a non-permanent member on four earlier occasions. I don't regard it as an embarrassment, I regard it as a disappointment. I congratulate Portugal and Sweden on their victories.

**JRNLSST:**

Mr Howard, on the Jobs Committee. Because that's essentially a committee that was going to be there anyway and it's been renamed, is it not just a bit of window dressing or, what's going to change in structural terms as far as creating jobs?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No, it's not window dressing, no, no, certainly not. It includes, it's got a slightly different composition. The great difference is that for the first time we have a committee whose principal objective is to marshal all economic policy towards the goal of job generation, not towards some less pragmatic or practical goal.

**JRNLSST:**

Is this essentially just a moving feast, as circumstances change. First it's economics, then employment. What's next?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

How cynical.

**JRNLSST:**

Prime Minister, with South Australia having the highest youth unemployment in the country and the highest mainland unemployment, what's in it for South Australia?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Anything that helps generate jobs is good for South Australia. There are a lot of areas that are of direct relevance to this state but the fact that for the first time we have senior Ministers focusing the direction of economic policy towards job generation rather than other goals I think is very important in itself. But obviously the policies remain very significant and I don't suggest that because we have established this committee that that of itself is an answer to the problem, but it's an earnest of how serious we are about the challenge that's involved.

**JRNLS:**

Prime Minister, how concerned are you that all the employment indicators are showing considerable distance to heading in the right direction. (Inaudible)

**PRIME MINISTER:**

As I said in my speech, current levels of employment and unemployment are essentially a product of forces that have been abroad in the Australian economy for a long time. I want to see a change, I want to see an improvement. It will take time and policies must be allowed to be implemented and then they must be allowed to work before one can make a fair assessment of the impact of those policies.

**JRNLS:**

So are you acknowledging that it's going to take longer now to get unemployment down than you might have hoped?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'm not acknowledging anything in a time sequence, no.

**JRNLS:**

Do you have a time frame for (inaudible)?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Like Kim Beazley when he was Minister for Employment, I don't set specific targets, either by the numerical ones or time ones. I merely commit myself and my Government to doing all it can at all times to improve the levels of employment.

**JRNLS:**

Prime Minister, are you still confident you'll reach the Budget target of 8.25%?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I have had no evidence put to me that would suggest I ought to change any of the Budget estimates.

**JRNLS:**

Are you heartened by Bob Carr's endorsement of the Lindsay by election win, saying that it's time to give the Liberal Government a fair go?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'm heartened by his honest acknowledgment of what I said on Sunday. I don't think he endorsed a win, I don't think he did, did he? I think what he said was that we're entitled to a fair go and he's dead right and he's giving some very sound advice to his Federal Labor colleagues.

**JRNLS:**

How did your meeting with Premier Brown go?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I beg your pardon?

**JRNLS:**

How did your meeting with Premier Brown go?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

As always, very well. very productive indeed.

**JRNLS:**

Were you able to offer him any assurances about the car industry?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

You heard what I had to say at the luncheon. That was the tenor of our discussion. He of course has put a very strong case about the car industry. We're going to have an inquiry and then we'll consider the results of that inquiry, but what I said in my speech represents my thinking and the thinking of my Government.

**JRNLSST:**

Mr Howard, is the Government looking at a total ban on foreign doctors?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

We are examining that whole area. There's obviously an oversupply nationally in the number of doctors and in those circumstances it's not surprising and I think wholly reasonable that people who go to universities in this country look askance at the fact that several hundred foreign doctors continue to come into Australia each year.

**JRNLSST:**

Prime Minister did you discuss the issue of AN with the Premier?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

We just touched on it.

**JRNLSST:**

In what context?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, sensibly but we just touched on it.

**JRNLSST:**

Would you be comfortable with a complete ban on overseas doctors?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

The matter remains under consideration by the Cabinet and I don't want to say any more beyond acknowledging that I understand the feelings of people who are Australian citizens who go to Australian universities, who study for a long period of time and face very heavy competitive pressures. I do understand their feelings.

**JRNLSST:**

How does this fit with your skilled migration call?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Very easily.

**JRNLS:**

Does AN have a future?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Look, I haven't come here to announce anything about AN. All productive industries have futures in Australia.

**JRNLS:**

Prime Minister, just getting back to jobs, do you believe that you can make a significant impact on the unemployment figure in your first term?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

What I believe is that it's my responsibility as Prime Minister to keep economic growth and job generation right at the top of our priorities and that's what I've done and that's what last night's announcement was all about. Thank you.

**JRNLS:**

Mr Howard, are you concerned about a possible challenge to Chris Gallus locally in South Australia?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'd be surprised in the extreme if Chris Gallus were challenged, worse than that if there were any threat to her. She has demonstrated herself to be one of the really successful marginal seat winners and holders in the whole country. She's increased her majority on three occasions. She's a very hard working Member. She contributes enormously to a range of issues and I just have to say, speaking as the Party Leader, I have found her an excellent Member and given what she's been able to do as first of all, the Member for Hawker, a seat that had been held by the Labor Party for years, and then as the Member for (Hindmarsh) Kingston and to get swings in her direction successively, I can't for the life of me understand why anybody in that electorate would want another Member.

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