



14 February 1997

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER
THE HON. JOHN HOWARD MP
DOORSTOP - FEDERAL SECRETARIAT, CANBERRA**

E & OE.....

JRNLS:

Do you regret Gabi Hollows' resignation from the Fred Hollows' Foundation?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I don't know all of the circumstances of it. Obviously her loss to that particular body is a great shame but that was her decision. It in no way alters my view or the view of the Government that there should be different people on the CAASA board because that board needs a lot of people who are experts in safety matters and at all times we have respected and understood Ms Hollows' expertise in other areas. That was made very plain. The fact that she has resigned from the Hollows Foundation is regrettable but that really is a matter for her and she has her reasons and she will no doubt be asked about them but it doesn't in any way alter, in any way, the Government's position in relation to the board. They're two separate issues. We said we wanted a different board. We've been quite openly trying to bring about a different board. It's in the interests of air safety in Australia that that happens and that that is our position and the Minister has sought to implement Government policy and he deserves credit for doing that and credit for passionately pursuing the cause of greater safety in the Australian skies.

JRNLS:

You say in the interest of air safety, why doesn't the Government just double the size of the CAASA board to get the aviation experience and expertise on there?

PRIME MINISTER:

The most important thing is to get a board which is absolutely focused on the issue of air safety and that's what John Sharp has been trying to do for a year and there is obviously a little bit of political payback in the behaviour of the current Chairman of

the Board and I think that's a great pity. The former Government made an absolute mess of air safety when it was in power. They ought to get out of the way and let the new Government and the new Minister implement the authority we have from the people. Now that doesn't reflect on the other qualities of those people but they just don't have experience in this area. It's a critical area. It's not an area for playing Canberra games on. It's an area for making sensible decisions in the interests of air safety for the Australian people.

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