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PRIME MINISTER

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

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PRIME MINISTER:

They're trying to destroy the work-for-the-dole legislation. The very earliest on my advice that the legislation can be debated is the 23rd of June, which is the last sitting week before the winter recess. We now face the possibility of months and months of deliberate obstruction and delay, the Labor party has revealed its true colours on the work for the dole legislation. It was a very simple Bill. Are you for or against work for the dole. The Labor party is clearly against it. The Australian people want this measure. It's one of the elements of our attack on the problem of youth unemployment. The Labor party and the Democrats are delaying the government's attempts to tackle the problem of youth unemployment. It is a disgraceful delaying tactic. Kim Beazley said he was in favour of it. What he's doing is allowing or perhaps being overwhelmed by his colleagues in the Senate to commit a course of action which is delaying and obstructing - this is not a complicated measure. It's a simple measure. We simply proposed that the restriction on compulsion now in the Social Security legislation be taken out. And the Labor party is trying to delay, obstruct and frustrate that. I condemn them and the Australian people will condemn them.

JOURNALIST:

You were hoping to get the pilot projects going I think by September. How much of a delay will this mean?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well if it's not dealt with before the winter recess, we won't get them in September. And our attempt to reduce youth unemployment will be stymied, obstructed, and sabotaged by the combined efforts of the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Democrats. I mean they've got to say yes or no. Are they for this or against it. Clearly

they're pretending they're for it, yet they are by their legislative actions trying to sabotage and undermine it.

JOURNALIST:

Do you think you'll get it through though eventually?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well we don't control the Senate, despite what some people say. We don't. And if this measure doesn't go through it will strike a body blow at the prospects we have of reducing youth unemployment. It's one of the elements of our attack on youth unemployment. It has widespread community support. We want to get the pilots going by September. We'll make the additional money available, and the Labor Party and the Democrats are playing explosive politics with an attempt by the Federal Government to tackle youth unemployment. They ought to be ashamed of themselves.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister the opposition parties have said from the beginning thought that there are concerns about the open-endedness, or the permanency of the compulsion clause which is what it's all about. They've also said there were questions about training. They might want to move some amendments. I mean, isn't this just the democratic process at work?

PRIME MINISTER:

No, this is obstruction. I mean you're either for or against this. It's a very simple principle. It's not complicated. We're simply saying that in 1997 it is reasonable for the community to say of people who are guaranteed a safety net that they should at award rates be prepared to do something in return for that guaranteed safety net. Now it's a good, sound, fair go principle. Are you for it or against it? We are for it. The Australian Labor Party and the Democrats are against it.

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