



16 April 1997

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
THE HON. JOHN HOWARD MP  
RADIO INTERVIEW WITH ANNA REYNOLDS, RADIO 4 QR**

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

**REYNOLDS:**

Mr Howard good morning and thank you very much for coming in.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well it's very nice to be here Anna.

**REYNOLDS:**

Welcome to Queensland.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It's always a pleasure to be here in Queensland.

**REYNOLDS:**

In Rob Borbidge territory. He was sitting in that chair last week, had some pretty harsh words to say about you.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I don't think they'd have been too harsh. We get on pretty well. He's got a job to do for Queensland and he does it very well. We have a very good working relationship. I appreciated the very courageous support his Government gave me last year on gun control legislation. I know that wasn't easy for some of his party members and I am very conscious of that but he took a broad, national view which befits a person who I think has a very balanced and mature view of important issues.

**REYNOLDS:**

He wants the political payback from you now though.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I don't think he would put it in those terms

**REYNOLDS:**

That's what it is though, isn't it.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And I don't think it should be. He wants what I want and that is a workable solution that respects native title but delivers certainty to farmers. They're the goals I've set myself. I want a workable solution. I don't want a solution that produces endless layers of additional litigation. I do respect native title but you've got to understand that the Wik decision turned on its head the expectations of Australian farmers and the common belief of everybody, Paul Keating said pastoral leases had extinguished native title. It was acknowledged by Aboriginal leaders. The farmers believed it. They were led to believe that by the National Farmers Federation in 1993 so the starting point of understanding what is a fair outcome is to appreciate the extent to which the Wik decision defied the expectations of most sections of the Australian community and we have to understand that you need a workable solution, one that respects native title. I don't want to throw the Mabo decision out. I want to try and accommodate the interests of the Aboriginal community but I also want a decision that delivers security for farmers. It's very hard...

**REYNOLDS:**

I'm just wondering how you are, are you a magician? Are you going to pull this out of the air magically?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I think it's one of those things where everybody should avoid the cheap shot. It's not easy and it's very easy for people who don't have the responsibility of trying to get everybody together to say, it's taking too long. I mean, I notice with respect a couple of my State Premier colleagues sort of saying, it's all taking too long. I just say to them, this is not something for cheap rhetoric. It's a question of sitting down and understanding that in order to reach a fair accommodation time is required. I hope we can...

**REYNOLDS:**

What is the time table?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well as soon as I can but surely the right decision is more important than whether it's today or tomorrow or next week. I mean, this obsession with whether a particular time table has been reached is really trivialising it. It's not really helping. People have got to understand that this particular issue poses one of the great threats to the instability of our land management system that we've had since European settlement in this country and it can't be lightly dealt with and the debate shouldn't be coloured with facetious references to racism or things of that kind. We will not have a racist outcome, we will have a fair outcome.

**REYNOLDS:**

Well in terms of some of the alternatives, codification has been mentioned. Can you just sort of flesh out some of the possibilities?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well everybody has a different view. What I am trying to do is to get the parties to accept a proposal that preserves the fabric intact of the Mabo decision, recognises the instability created by the Wik decision and tries to address the impact of that instability so far as the pastoralists and the farmers are concerned.

**REYNOLDS:**

So that's not recognising the outcome of the Wik decision? That's not entrenching native title?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well the problem with the Wik decision is it destroyed everybody's understanding of where they stood but I am going to try and get a fair, a workable outcome and one that is in all of the circumstances fair to everybody. Now I don't think I've got it at the moment and I will be the first to acknowledge that it's very difficult and I don't expect people to sort of have endless patience on it either but I do say to people, this is not an issue for easy, throwaway lines and it's not an issue for extravagant language.

**REYNOLDS:**

You said just a moment ago you haven't got it at the moment. How confident are you you will be...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I don't know. I will be talking to the Aboriginal leaders again on Friday in Canberra. I will be talking again to the Western Australian Premier on Friday. I will probably talk by phone to Mr Borbidge. He's in Japan I think at the present time. I will probably talk to him by phone today and I will talk to any other Premier. Look, I

understand the Queensland Premier's concern about this. The area of Australia potentially claimable, I use the words potentially claimable post Wik is something like 78%. Of course that's the vacant Crown land plus pastoral leaseholds. Now that is a breathtaking figure and people have to understand that and when they're addressing it you can't look at it in terms at sort of some emotional, rhetorical responses.

**REYNOLDS:**

All right. I'd like to move onto another issue now - the Senator Mal Colston affair. Do you like him?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I don't know him very well and it's irrelevant whether I like him or I dislike him. The little contact I've had with him and can I say, I've probably only had three or four conversations with him in my life and I've certainly not had any conversations with him in the last six or nine months. I've, I don't have a strong view either way. I've no reason to personally dislike him but look, that's not the issue. The issue is that until January of this year I was not aware personally, I had no recollection until January of this year of any allegations about him having rorted his travel allowance. Now that makes me very different from Mr Beazley. I just want to make this point, that Mr Beazley and Mr Evans knew 13 years ago that there were allegations about him rorting travel allowances. I knew in January of this year and it's a very big difference. Mr Beazley is running around at the moment saying that in 1983 he behaved no differently than Kevin Newman in the Fraser Government had behaved in 1982. What Kevin Newman according to the files did, I didn't know about it at the time, because I wouldn't of necessity be involved, what he did, he wanted to send it off to the police then and he was advised by his Department there was insufficient justification for doing so. He then wrote off to the Acting Attorney General. He behaved impeccably, Beazley and Evans decided to reject legal advice to send it to the police so therefore they have no credibility at all in attacking us.

When we found out about it I said that anybody accused of doing these things should be treated in the same way as another citizen. They shouldn't be given an unfair trial but equally they should face the full rigour of the law and we have now sent the thing off to the Australian Federal Police. We are doing the correct thing and I think this attempt by Mr Beazley to say, you know, really both of us 13 or 14 years ago did things badly. I didn't know anything about his behaviour 13 or 14 years ago. It was in January to my recollection that I first heard of any allegations and of course they are the allegations which are now the subject of investigation by the Federal Police.

**REYNOLDS:**

We are getting a lot of feedback from people saying that he really should resign as Deputy President.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Now I said that last week and I have also said that, and let me repeat it again, that if Senator Colston has not resigned as Deputy President by the time the Parliament meets again then our numbers are there to vote him out. I said that last week. There should be no doubt, I noticed one of our papers this morning, the Sydney Morning Herald had this peculiar editorial suggesting that I still hadn't made it clear where we stood on the question of his resignation.

**REYNOLDS:**

All right. Just in relation to the Senate Privileges Committee, why shouldn't they have a look at it? Wouldn't that be reasonable in the circumstances?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Senator Hill's view on that as Leader of the Government in the Senate, I think it has some substance, is that you've got a police investigation going on at the present time. To use the old saying, it's a bit like having a dog and barking, but can I just say one thing further, we discussed this matter yesterday in Brisbane at our Cabinet meeting at very great lengths and I'm making it clear this morning that in all of the circumstances if Senator Colston remains a member of the Senate we will not in future accept his vote.

**REYNOLDS:**

Is that right?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

We won't. We have decided that in the future, if he remains a Member, if he purports to vote with us we will arrange for one of our Senators to absent himself or herself from the division and we've taken that decision because we think that is the right response in all of the circumstances. The Senate has no power to expel a Senator and frankly I don't think either house of Parliament should have the power to expel somebody. In the whole history of federation, to my understanding only one person has ever been expelled and that was in 1920. A Labor Member for Kalgoorlie was expelled at the height of the Anglo Irish argument over Irish home rule and there were great overtones of sectarianism at the time of that and ever since then, people have shied away from the notion that Parliament should be able to expel its own members and in fact in 1987 the former Government put forward a bill to take the power of expulsion away from the Senate so the question of whether he stays in the Senate or not is ultimately a matter for him and the operation of the law but for so long as stays there and until this matter is resolved we won't accept his vote in the future.

**REYNOLDS:**

So from when the Senate sits again..

**PRIME MINISTER:**

From when the Senate sits I give notice that we will not accept his vote and the way that we will not accept his vote is that we will arrange that if he does decide to support the Government on an issue, we will arrange for one of our number to drop out of the division so that his vote is not in effect counted. Now...

**REYNOLDS:**

And is this recognition of the really serious damage this is doing your Government in the electorate?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It's a recognition in the mind of the Government that it's the right thing to do to assert standards and to assert the perception of the importance of standards. Now I still believe that like any other citizen he is entitled to his day in court. I don't know the full ramifications of all of the allegations. I only know what is on the public record and however strongly people may feel about him, my responsibility is to support the rule of law and to say that Mal Colston, like any other citizen, is entitled to a day in court. He's entitled to a fair trial, all the other generic descriptions we use to describe our system of the presumption of innocence. Now the presumption of innocence...

**REYNOLDS:**

So he's innocent until proven guilty but you won't accept his vote?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well we are entitled to do that. I mean, that's not making a judgement about him. It's making, it's making...

**REYNOLDS:**

What is it saying about him?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well it is saying that in the circumstances and until these allegations are resolved, we don't think it is appropriate to accept his vote. Now what the Labor Party does, the Labor Party really should adopt the same attitude but let me make it clear, our declaration is not conditional on the Labor Party, ours is unilateral, it is not conditional. I mean, I can't believe that the Labor Party will accept his vote. I assume of course that if Senator Colston had still been a member of the Labor Party and these allegations had come up but after what I've heard from Senator Ray and Mr Beazley and Mr Evans they would of course have adopted the same approach that I am announcing this morning but I don't really care what they do. For the Government's point of view when the Senate sits, we won't accept his vote.

**REYNOLDS:**

What do you expect him to do?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I don't know. I mean, I really don't know.

**REYNOLDS:**

You haven't talked to him on this?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No I haven't and that is a matter for him. I have no idea what he is going to do.

**REYNOLDS:**

What do you think of his behaviour over the years?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Look, as I say, to the best of my recollection, the first I knew about these allegations was in January and...

**REYNOLDS:**

But you've been reading the papers like everybody else. You've heard the stories about what has been coming up.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well look, the allegations, I mean, if the allegations are true then it's very, very poor behaviour, obviously, to say the least. But I am quite serious in saying that everybody in our system is entitled to a presumption of innocence and when a Prime Minister gets to a situation of accepting somebody a being guilty until he or she is proven guilty then I think you are behaving in an irresponsible fashion. Now what we have done has been measured, responsible, correct. What I am announcing this morning is a very, very clear message to the people of Australia that until this matter is cleared up we are not going to accept his vote. Now he may choose to do what he will. That's his right.

**REYNOLDS:**

Is there much point him staying in the Senate?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

That is a matter for him to decide. I mean, a lot of people would think not but that is entirely a matter for him at the end of the day but I am making it clear that until the

matter is resolved then we won't accept his vote and I have explained how we will do it. Now I would imagine that he would behave in the same, I imagine the Labor Party would reciprocate but that's a matter for the Labor Party.

**REYNOLDS:**

We'd better take some calls now. I mean I've got lots more questions for you but people are interested, really interested in having a chat so if you could put those headphones on, Liz, good morning.

**CALLER:**

Welcome Mr Howard to Queensland.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Hello Liz.

**CALLER:**

You've answered some of my questions in your discussion there. I think we should believe in the presumption of innocence until proven guilty too. But I'm quite curious with this Colston affair how far back we're going to look at these travel rorts and given Mr Colston's alleged previous misdemeanour in this matter that you're looking back at that, are you also going to look back at our previous Prime Minister's history and why action wasn't taken against him?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, my view would be that if any substantial evidence is distinct from insubstantial allegation were presented in writing to anybody it would be investigated. I don't have any particular desire to persecute my predecessor. I think the Australian people did a good job on him 14 months ago. And I'm not particularly into witch hunts because he was a former Labor Prime Minister. But we're all in the same boat. If anybody's got any evidence as distinct from scuttlebutt about anybody, well, they're entitled to bring it forward to the authorities.

**REYNOLDS:**

Alan, good morning.

**CALLER:**

Good morning Mr Howard.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Good morning.



**CALLER:**

Welcome to Brisbane.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Thank you.

**CALLER:**

Mr Howard, I'm not racist or radical. I hold conservative views. But for many years I've been concerned with the state of Aborigines in the Kimberleys and outback Queensland and through the Territory. Years ago I used to work around those areas and I...you know...and what I want to draw attention to firstly is the fact that we've spent billions of dollars over the last...I mean, I hear the figure \$13 billion over the last 13 years bandied around quite frequently. I have no way of checking if it's true or not and I...

**REYNOLDS:**

What's your question Alan?

**CALLER:**

...(inaudible) lost lots of money and it's never got to a source, you know, where it was needed to be spent. But my question is really about Pauline Hanson. And, you know, we've got to admit she's got a lot of courage and she's drawing attention to a problem that does exist and about which very little has been done for a long, long time.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

What's your question though?

**CALLER:**

I really want to know why is she been pilloried by Labor, Aborigines, various politicians, press and the media people? The Mayor of Brisbane this morning called her an evil woman.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, I saw that outburst by the Mayor of Brisbane. I've got to say that is one of the most unintelligent, uninformed comments I've heard in politics for quite a while. To liken Pauline Hanson to Adolf Hitler is to betray an absolutely abysmal understanding of history. It is also that kind of extreme comment which diminishes the quality of objective criticism of what she has done and what she stands for. I mean, one way to sort of lose an argument with somebody is to go over the top. And I think the Mayor of Brisbane went right over the top and in the process has actually done the cause of legitimate dissent from what the Member for Oxley is putting forward a great deal of

damage. I mean, my view about the Member for Oxley is that there has been a massive over preoccupation with her by the press, I'm sorry to say, more heavily in some areas of the press than others. But I won't be any more detailed than that this morning. And I just think...I mean, I've come back from China recently and the issue was certainly not on top of mind over there. I think this whole business of preoccupation of some sections of the Australian media was ridiculous. There was a four paragraph report sourced from *AAP* on page 7 of the *Straits Times* in Singapore and that was the basis of four or five questions at a press conference by the Australian media. Now, I really think the whole thing has got out of proportion.

**REYNOLDS:**

Well you can say that but that doesn't take account of the talkback we're getting. I mean, we get lots of calls about...(inaudible)...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I know you get a lot, I know you get a lot of the calls but...

**REYNOLDS:**

...(inaudible) and people are interested and people are...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well look, I'm happy to talk about the issues that are involved. And I've said before that the Australian community has gone through an enormous amount of change and there's been a lot of strain put on people and put on rural people as a result of that change over the last few years. And to some extent it is easy to tap discontent, and if you use fairly simplistic language. Now, as in every, all things, there are some things that everybody says at various stages that I might agree with. I mean, obviously we can't have unlimited immigration to Australia. Obviously we need to respect the traditions and the cultures of this country but we also need to be a very tolerant country. And one of the great things about Australia is that we are tolerant. And one of the things that I resent about the tide of political correctness of recent years is that it has endeavoured to paint Australians as a bigoted, racist, intolerant group of people when plainly we are not.

**REYNOLDS:**

Do you think Pauline Hanson's a racist?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I wouldn't use that expression, no. I think the expression racist is used altogether too freely in this country. All together too freely. Oh look, I think her criticisms last year in two particular respects were quite inaccurate. I mean, the Aboriginal community remains, as a group, the most underprivileged in Australia. And it is as the gentlemen, Alan, just said, a scandal that we have spent large amounts of money over the years

and the standard of Aboriginal health has not risen. Now, it's a very difficult issue and will take...

**REYNOLDS:**

So we should still maintain special funding to Aboriginal groups?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well of course you should maintain some special funding but you have a right to redirect it towards health, education and housing. And you have a right to assert that throwing money after a problem is not the only response. And you have a right to point out, without being criticised as a racist, you have a right to point out that there are attitudinal reasons and within both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities as to why some of these difficulties continue.

**REYNOLDS:**

Okay. We should move on to a couple of other calls now. Henry, good morning. Yes Henry. Yes you're on.

**CALLER:**

Oh, I beg your pardon, an aircraft was just flying over. Good morning Mr Prime Minister.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Good morning Henry.

**CALLER:**

I have a few little questions for you John. Why have you got into the pensioners?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Why have a I got into the pensioners?

**CALLER:**

You cut off the home equity loan and all those...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I haven't got into the pensioners at all. That is...I mean, we give good things, for example, for...

**CALLER:**

(Inaudible)

**PRIME MINISTER:**

...self funded retirees and we delivered in full, on time in relation to our commitment to them. I haven't got into the pensioners at all.

**CALLER:**

My sister in Rockhampton, 82, and I had to go down and get a home equity loan from her...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

A home equity loan?

**CALLER:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

But is that something the Government provides?

**CALLER:**

Yes it is. It would help you. It was done through a State Bank down there.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

The State Bank.

**CALLER:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well look, if you'd like to speak to my...write to me about that, I will investigate it. But I'm puzzled at your allegation.

**CALLER:**

Look, as soon as you got into power, elected in March, and at June, the 28th of June last year it was just taken off.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I'd like to investigate it. I don't recall the decision that I took that affected your sister. But I will be very happy to investigate it. I can't imagine I'd have done that.

**CALLER:**

Well that's what happened...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It's just not...out of character.

**REYNOLDS:**

All right Henry, the Prime Minister's agreed to take that one up for you. Thank you. Joining us next is Tina, good morning.

**CALLER:**

What do you think of the social countries where the government takes the guns, the land and they abolish freedom and implement total control?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I'm against it. I'm completely against it.

**CALLER:**

Right. What do you have to say to Australians, the vast minority, who know that only the worst governments take the guns off the people?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well if you're talking about the laws that I was responsible for last year, and I think you may be, then I don't agree with you. I think what I did last year expanded peoples' freedom because it meant that a large section of the population felt freer to go about their daily lives without the threat of being the subject of unwanted violence with automatic and semi-automatic weapons. See, when people talk about freedom they forget that one of the strongest freedoms, the greatest freedoms you can have is freedom from fear. And I think in a peaceful democratic society the right to walk around on a pleasant Sunday afternoon, the right to go about your daily lives, the right to go out at night without fear of violence, is one of the most precious things that can be given by any government and any steps taken by any government to improve the physical safety and security of citizens is something that I very strongly support.

**REYNOLDS:**

Grahame, good morning.

**CALLER:**

Oh, good morning John.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Good morning.

**CALLER:**

I recently had to have a hernia operation for which I had to wait six months. During this time I talked with other people on the waiting lists, some serious and some not so serious. Now, it seems to me that during this time there are people who are waiting and the impression I have is that there are more people who had serious problems, dying and incapacitated, every month than were killed or injured at the problems we had in Tasmania. Now the reason I could not afford attention sooner is because I was involved in a fraud. Now this fraud occurred in New South Wales. But I approached the New South Wales Fraud Squad and also the Australian Securities Commission in New South Wales...

**REYNOLDS:**

Hang on a tick Grahame, let's cut to the question here.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

What's the question?

**CALLER:**

The question is regarding Mal Colston etc. You can involve the police to investigate this matter but for a private citizen to have something investigated of a very serious nature like a million dollars or \$200 000, you can't get a response.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Have you spoken to your local member of Parliament about this? I think you should. I think you ought to talk both to your local State and Federal member of Parliament about it and if there's substance in it I'm sure those members will pursue on your behalf.

**REYNOLDS:**

All right. Thank you for that. Joining us next is Ted, good morning.

**CALLER:**

Good morning Anna. Thank you for your time Prime Minister.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Good morning Ted.

**CALLER:**

I believe our Premier, Rob Borbidge, is jumping on the Hanson, One Nation, bandwagon and I think...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I don't...I think that's grossly unfair to say that.

**CALLER:**

Well I justify that statement by saying that the National Party President (sic) in the last couple of days, Ken Crooke, said as much by saying that their policies were similar and he...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well look I...look, I remember Rob Borbidge actually making quite a strong statement about this issue last year. And I think it's quite...and all of my dealings with Rob Borbidge suggests that he's got, of course, intelligently conservative values on lots of issues as I hope I have. But he's a very tolerant person and I think you're trying to make a bit of a political point...

**REYNOLDS:**

All right, thanks for that Ted. Well there's still people waiting.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I don't mind.

**REYNOLDS:**

Are you right to take a couple more?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Yeah, unless my minders tell me...

**REYNOLDS:**

They're getting a bit restless.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well they can...they'll have to wait. I've got to go and launch the Green Corps. The Green Corps...I mean, there are projects in that for Queensland so I don't want to keep it waiting too long. But if you've got a couple more question I'll be happy...

**REYNOLDS:**

All right, okay. Neville, good morning.

**CALLER:**

Good morning Mr Howard. I commend you Prime Minister on your stand for decency and the concern for the families of Australia. But may I say that my question (inaudible) around the concern that I and my wife and many of my friends have, and we're grandparents, about a discussion paper which just recently we've been aware of that's come from the Federal Attorney-General's office. One other thing Mr Howard, that proposal of sexual activity be recognised, authorised, made lawful between people who are as young as 10 years of age and decriminalising the offence of incest. It goes further. But Mr Howard, are you aware of this?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I'm aware of debate about the attempts to have a uniform age of consent and that involves bringing in to line the age of consent involving homosexual and heterosexual activity. I have to say that I myself am not in favour of lowering the age of consent from any of the existing levels. If there's a bit of disuniformity well, so be it. I'm not in favour of lowering the age of consent. I haven't heard it suggested that incest be decriminalised. That's a new...you're the first person that's ever mentioned...I'm not saying...I mean, I recognise that you're strongly against it and I respect your view on that fully and I might say I agree with it very strongly. But I'm not aware of that. I'll check it out.

**REYNOLDS:**

All right. Jim, unemployment. Very quickly.

**CALLER:**

Mr Howard I'm in a position of work where I come across a great cross section of the community from CEOs, as you call them, to cleaners. And the overriding message that I'm getting is that everyone, almost (inaudible) are worried about their job, their current position. First question is, do you think that's a reasonable response from them considering what's happening with, you know, companies shedding workers and, you know, thousands going from here and thousands going from there? That's the



first question. The other question is, do you really think that changing the status of the unfair dismissal laws and also the situation with collective bargaining and things, do you really think that's having an improvement in our society because the word that I get is unbelievably in the other direction?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, if I can take those in reverse. I do believe that the *Workplace Relations Act*, which is the, you call, collective bargaining - it's not quite that, but anyway that's what you have in mind - and the unfair dismissal changes are good changes. The old unfair dismissal law that we're trying to get rid of completely and in order to rid it, rid Queensland of it in full, we need the help of the Queensland government. And I hope that they will come into line with what we've proposed federally. I've spoken to the Minister about it. I hope he will. But the problem with the old law was that it actually frightened a lot of small firms out of taking on new staff. They felt that if they had got somebody who was no good they couldn't get rid of them. And, I mean, you've got to be realistic about this. If you're running a small business and you've got one disruptive employee that person can wreck the operation of your business and if you can't get rid of them then the whole thing can grind to a halt. And I have seen this happen. I mean, it's all very well to talk about the brutal boss but you've also got to recognise that there can be a maverick, disruptive employee. And people in that situation running a small business, you can't afford to settle out of court an unfair dismissal claim because it might the whole of your year's profits. So I think that is a good change. I understand that some people feel a degree of uncertainty and I understand that. And I think the causes of it will diminish over time because the general economic outlook is very good. We are growing quite strongly. Business investment is good. Inflation is low. Interest rates have come down. The trade account is a little better. So when you add all of those things together some of that uncertainty and insecurity will disappear. But I do understand it and I'm not dismissive of some of the concerns that you've expressed.

**REYNOLDS:**

Jim thank you for your call. Mr Howard thank you very much for coming in. Good luck with the launch of the Green Corp. And will you come back next time you're in town?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'd be delighted to.

**REYNOLDS:**

Thank you very much, Prime Minister John Howard.