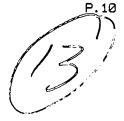
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# PRIME MINISTER

22 October 1997

# TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP DOORSTOP - CLARIDGES HOTEL, LONDON

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#### JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, how confident are you on getting Tony Blair on side on greenhouse gases?

#### PRIME MINISTER:

Well, I'm very confident that Australia will go to the Kyoto Conference offering in a very constructive way to play its part but putting forward a proposition that protects the Australian national interest. My job is to look after Australia. Mr Blair's job is to look after Britain. Obviously, we come from somewhat different points of view on this issue and there is no point in pretending otherwise because Britain's circumstances are different from Australia's but I'll be seeing him this afternoon and I'm quite certain that, consistent with the capacity of our two countries to work things through, I'm quite certain that although we have different vantage points where appropriate we will agree to disagree.

## JOURNALIST:

Do you think you'll be out on your own at CHOGM on the issue?

# PRIME MINISTER:

I wouldn't expect so, but at the end of the day it's not a question of whether you're out on your own or not, it's whether you're doing the right thing by Australia, and there is no doubt in the world that the stance that I am taking is in Australia's national

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is on that criteria and according to that benchmark that I choose to be interest nothing else.

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mtries might support Australia's position?

#### ¿ MINISTER:

I don't think that's the issue at all. The issue is what is in the best interests of tralia and I can just say to the Australian public that as Prime Minister I'll be rocating Australia's interest. I'll naturally be doing it in a co-operative way and it position includes making a very significant contribution to the reduction of reenhouse gases but judge me by what I do for Australia, not according to anything else.

#### JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, negative inflation. A good result. Any implications for interest rates, do you think?

#### PRIME MINISTER:

Oh, it was a magnificent result. I mean this is astonishingly good economic news. This is the lowest inflation rate in 35 years. Australia has a government which has got the fundamentals in the Australian economy right in a way that we haven't seen for 20 or more years. You have the best convergence of economic fundamentals now. It bodes well for very strong economic growth and that's important for employment because if we can bust through the 4 per cent growth figure, and this lays the foundation for it, then we can start to see unemployment come down because the passport to lower unemployment is strong growth and you can't have strong growth if you have inflationary pressures and we don't have them. This is a tremendous outcome for Australia and sends a very positive signal to the business community ...

#### JOURNALIST:

On interest rates?

### PRIME MINISTER:

... on all fronts. I'm not going to speculate about interest rates, you know that, I won't do it. But you couldn't have a better inflationary situation. You have got a strong budget situation and our budget position is very strong indeed. The decisions we took in the first two budgets have made the ground work for a strongly growing Australian economy and I'm absolutely delighted. We took the hard decisions early. We've been criticised. We've been derided but we are now starting to see the fruits of

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that fiscal rectitude and it is going to be seen in higher growth, falling unemployment and a much better output next year.

Thank you.

[Ends}