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## PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

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### MEDIBANK STRIKE

The A.C.T.U. Executive action is grossly irresponsible and directly against the national interest.

Mr Hawke's statement that the Government wants confrontation is nonsense. He knows it is nonsense.

The facts are plain.

The Government recently asked the Trade Union movement to make representations regarding the administration of Medibank.

The Government listened to the Trade Union movement's views and gave them careful consideration.

The Government came to the conclusion that the Medibank proposals, as recently modified, were fair and equitable, and would provide the best possible health care for ALL Australians.

The Trade Union movement seems to have forgotten that the Government has made a major modification to Medibank to enable Medibank insurance to compete with private health funds. The Executive seems not to have taken that into account at all.

The Government's reformed Medibank scheme will also impose no cost on the poorer people in the community. Under the Government proposals everyone has to be covered.

It will also provide genuine health care choice and allow freedom in the medical profession.

The Trade Union proposals, if adopted, would not have improved health care and health insurance for Australians.

Under the A.C.T.U. proposal, those thousands of two-income Australian families would pay twice.

The A.C.T.U. proposals would have done nothing for the low income earner and would have kept the dispute between the public hospitals and the doctors alive.

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Wages lost during a 24-hour Medibank strike would go a long way to meeting the cost of the Medibank levy for many Australian families.

Wages lost from one day's strike alone would have paid two months Medibank levy for Australians earning around the national average wage.

For those on the lowest incomes because they don't pay the Medibank levy, the wages lost from the strike could only be a net loss.

In other words, Mr Hawke is telling thousands of Australians to throw money away.

When Mr Hawke finds himself in a corner he says the Government wants a confrontation.

He of all people knows that this is not true. His colleagues in his own office and other trade union officials who recently attended discussions with the Government also know that this is not true.

What Mr Hawke knows privately, but will not admit publicly, is that this Government has been far more willing to cooperate with the trade union movement than Labor ever was.

We have demonstrated time and time again that we are prepared to listen to union views and to change our proposals where it is in the nation's interests.

The real problem facing Mr Hawke is that he is not prepared to stand up to those trade union officials who want strike action for purely political reasons.

Mr Hawke will have to realise that there is only one national Government in Australia.

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