



PRIME MINISTER

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ELECTORATE TALK

The announcement of a further reduction in home mortgage interest rates is a timely reminder of the success of the Government's anti-inflation policies. This cut -- that will benefit hundreds of thousands of Australian families -- could not have been achieved without firm and steady economic management. It could not have been achieved if the Government had been diverted from its fight against inflation.

The interest rates cut -- which follows a similar reduction earlier this year and a cut in overdraft rates some three weeks ago -- is one more clear sign that our policies are working.

This year, the Government has continued to build on the solid achievements of 1977. Inflation continues to fall; interest rates are falling; investment is increasing and Australian companies are again starting to look for export opportunities. This is the path to growth that will give permanent jobs to Australians. There are no short cuts, or magic elixirs to reducing unemployment. There is only one answer. It's not very exciting, dramatic or attention grabbing. It simply involves getting the fundamentals in the economy right so that private enterprise is encouraged -- with incentive from Government -- to expand and to offer new job opportunities.

The Government has also pressed forward with reforms that provide increased opportunity for migrant families, for Aboriginals, for the handicapped, the aged and infirm and has further protected the rights of individual Australians.

It is unfortunate that the Federal Labor opposition has failed to focus on these and other issues that affect every Australian. They have been pre-occupied with peripheral politics. They have sought -- through innuendo and vitriol -- to attack the Government by probing the private lives of Ministers. In this, they are led by the man who is best known for his phrase that "the 80's will be the decade of despair".

It is the Leader of the Opposition that has constantly tried to talk down our national achievements; who has belittled our aspirations; who has preached gloom and despondency at every opportunity and who has even knocked Australia and Australians when he was on his first overseas trip as Leader of the Opposition.

It is the Leader of the Opposition who described the Government's success in the fight against inflation as a "false dawn" and who says he is "sceptical" about lower interest rates.

On the few occasions that Opposition spokesmen turn to economic issues, they fail to offer realistic alternative policies. Labor calls for a budget deficit that would run out to \$4,500 million or more. That would create economic havoc, setting inflation galloping off again.

Labor's alternative to encourage industry is to abolish the investment allowance; their alternative to our police of encouraging exploration and development of oil is to impose a \$340 million levy on the profits of Australia's crude oil producers.

Mr. Hayden has an alternative for Australian manufacturing. Just a few days ago he said "I am committed to seeing a larger public sector over time". Mr. Hayden is advocating, in these words, the progressive destruction of free enterprise in this country -- death by inches for the Australian economy. They are sad and sorry policies, out of touch with Australian aspirations -- out of touch with reality. They demonstrate again -- in the starkest terms -- that Labor no longer represents the working men and women of this nation.

Australia will move into a great new decade of growth and development, despite Mr. Hayden's best efforts to prevent it. The knockers and the whingers will be left lamenting.

Australians look to politicians to provide confidence and to advance sound and workable policies. Australians have demonstrated very plainly that they reject the politics of despair and discontent.

Your Government has a vision of growth and development for Australia -- a vision of stability, security, concern and effective help for those in need. We have a vision of Australia in which the freedom and opportunity for individual Australians has no equal anywhere. By building on the foundations already set that vision will be realised. I am confident all Australians will meet this great task.