



## PRIME MINISTER

E. & O.E. - PROOF ONLY

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE - 13 JULY 1984

JOURNALIST: How do you think it went? .

PM: I think it was an excellent conference. I think that I can say on the evidence available to all of us that the Conference turned out in the way I asked it to in my speech on Tuesday - that is that the great majority of delegates came to conclusions, made decisions, resolutions which were couched in an understanding of the responsibility, not just to the Party, but to the people of Australia as a whole. And certainly there has been both a ringing endorsement of the approach of the Government to this stage and the provision of a basis for it to continue in the future in the same direction.

JOURNALIST: Mr. Hawke, on industry policy this morning. Given Australia's comparative advantage in the fields of primary production and mining, don't you think it is rather foolish and perhaps even dangerous to have an industry policy based, to quote the new platform, on the need for Australia to bring its trade pattern into line with other industrialised nations?

PM: Well, you can look at that as you will, I suppose. What will be done in a way which is totally consistent with that statement of policy is to do these things for the various sectors of our economy. We will recognise the truth that the great primary industries remain fundamental to the eternal welfare of Australia and as generation of wealth here and also in terms of earning considerable export income for us and we will be doing those things which are necessary both here and in our relations with other countries to expand the possibilities for the primary sector. In regard to the mineral sector, we will clearly be pursuing policies which enable the expansion of that sector in a way which will utilise both foreign and domestically generated capital. And in regard to the manufacturing sector we will develop policies which can be looked at in two ways - both industry specific in a way we have with the steel industry, with the automotive industry and we will be adopting policies, which as I put in my contribution today, which will take account of the industries that are here to try and make those that can be made more efficient, more efficient. We will try through the variety of policies, some indication of which we have already given to develop new ones. Now, that is precisely what we have been doing to this date and doing with very considerable success and I believe that the policy and the general statements that have been adopted today give us a mandate to proceed in that fashion, Max. I have no problem in noting and appreciating the contribution that will be made to the formulation of that policy as a mandate

for proceeding with the general strategy which has been so successful to this point.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, where does the Left Wing of the Party go, given that they lost every major issue before the Conference. Have they got a future in the Labor Party or what do they do?

PM: Well if you look at the history of the Labor Party, there is always a left, a right and a centre and I have no feeling that there is going to cease to be a left. I think I would say this, and I hope they won't regard it as gratuitous, indeed I know from some observations that there is this feeling within the Left itself, that they need to have a good look at themselves, that the positions adopted and the arguments embraced and the style pursued, seemed to many people, including many of their own, to be somewhat less than ideally suited to the conditions of the Party, the Government and the country as we go through 1984 and into '85. I think there will be some re-thinking. I hope so.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, was there an attempted double cross on the conscience vote on abortion?

PM: I don't think that is fair to put it as a double cross. I understood from what was said to me that it was being made clear that in respect of that motion there was no intention to use that as the basis for repealing the conscience vote and I understood that if any attempt were made those that had been associated with that proposal yesterday would not support any attempt in this Conference to repeal that. And that was essentially the position that those people did adopt. I think it was very interesting to see how the approach that was moved by Delegate Giles was repudiated by so many, not just the Right, and the Centre Left, but many within the Left itself couldn't bring themselves to vote for that.

JOURNALIST: Do you still hold the view that you expressed in the 1982 Conference opposed to the capital gains tax?

PM: That's a good question. I support without reservation the policy that was adopted at the 1984 Conference. It was the one that I advocated. It was the one that I had been associated with in the lead-up to the Conference. Let me make it quite clear, as I have said on a number of occasions, that what this Government has been attempting to do since we have been in office is to develop a constructive debate within the community, not just only in EPAC, but of course that is a most relevant forum. We have been attempting to develop a constructive debate within the community about the whole tax structure. I have said I think in a large press conference before, we have got to try and get an understanding of the way in which the community, individuals and organisations want to make part of their income available to government for the purpose of providing services through government back to the community and the sensible thing to do is to have that debate in a way which covers the whole range of tax on the one side and services provided on the other. And I am very encouraged by two things. Firstly, before we got to the

Conference there had been such a positive response from the business community and the trade union movement and other organisations to enter into this discussion. And secondly, by the way in which the Conference endorsed that approach. Now, as we go into next year, that debate will be encouraged and I am confident that as a result of that constructive, consultative approach, Australia will be able to move towards a position where it has total tax base which satisfies, as I say, the two criteria of efficiency and equity and once we have done that this community is going to be very much better off.

JOURNALIST: Mr. Hawke, the Centre Left and the Right delivered quite respectable and moderate policies this time. Would you like to see the Conference system reformed in some way so that the government at a later date is not embarrassed by say a major left wing policy ...

PM: If what?

JOURNALIST: If at a later date the Left Wing embarrassed the Government on some major issue of policy?

PM: Between conferences do you mean?

JOURNALIST: Well, would you like to see the Conference system reformed in some way?

PM: Well, could I pass onto an observation that was made by Alan Griffiths this morning. I met the business representatives at the Conference. There was a gathering at about 8.30. And in introducing me to the business representatives there he said - he proposed what seems to me on reflection a rather radical reform. He thanked them for being there and wondered how we could continue the association and said I look forward to seeing you at the next bicentennial conference. I thought that was probably taking it a bit far.

Now wait a minute, the question deserves more than that light-hearted observation. Look, Greg, when you are trying to work out what is the best way of enabling an input from the Party organisation of the formulation of policy, I guess you can always say that there are better ways than what exists, but whatever you do, factionalism is going to continue within the Party. But let me say this, that I don't believe that there will be any attempt by any of the factions now that the Conference is over to embarrass the Government. And the second point I would make is that I have total confidence in the capacity of this Government to continue to deliver the goods in regard to the aspirations of the Australian people in the important areas of the economy and the areas of social welfare. Now, to the extent that the Government continues to deliver the goods, as it will, then the Party will have no reason to want to embarrass the Government. And I am totally confident that by the time we get to the next Conference in 1986 that the Government will again get the support and the clear support of the great majority of the Party. I'm totally confident about that and I don't see any reason to change. It's quite clear, I think, that in some branches of the Party there will be moves by some sectors to try and strengthen their

position and that may produce some interesting changes.

JOURNALIST: Mr. Hawke, you said this morning there are some areas of concern in the car industry plan. What are those and would you agree that the whole thrust of the Conference policy in relation to industry protection was much more protectionist and interventionist than the Government than the Government was pursuing up until now?

PM: No, in regard to the second and in regard to the first, one sector of the major production union, the vehicle builders union, had expressed some concern, but overwhelmingly the view of the trade union movement as expressed through the ACTU, was totally supportive of the Government policy, as it should be because it is an excellent policy.

JOURNALIST: Mr. Hawke, to go back to taxation. Would you anticipate being able to be a bit more specific about the Government's plan during the election campaign or do you think that you will still be put in this position of a wide-ranging debate?

PM: I think the debate, the consultative process, will be going on into 1985. I will obviously be talking with the Australian electorate in the post-Budget situation about where we are and I believe that the Australian public will be very satisfied about where we are after the Budget and then I will be explaining to them the ideas that we have about involving them in these processes of discussion and again I believe that that is what they will want of this government.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, will the Government be offering the rehabilitated David Combe a job and if so, have you got anything in particular in mind?

PM: No, there wasn't any talk about offering a job. All that has been said is what ought to have been said, made clear and that is that there is no blackball against David. He has talents and capacities which he may think are appropriate in respect of some jobs that may arise and he knows now and I'm glad that it has been done. He now knows that if he wishes to apply for anything that may arise then he is able to go into that application process free of any stigma or blackball.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, on the important question of light bulbs what exactly did go through your mind?

P.M.: I'll tell you. I'll give you one observation that was made by my Deputy Prime Minister who was sitting on my right who, as you know, he exhibits his beliefs and his commitments and his faith through the Conference and he made the observation - he said Prime Minister, do you realise that in extremis you invoked the Almighty? There's just one thing, I thought my God if that is a shot, they can't miss from there. That was all.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, on uranium, now that you have an unambiguous pro-uranium policy as part of the platform, does that mean that any member who advocates an anti-uranium policy outside the councils of the Party faces the risk of discipline?

P.M.: Well I, as you know, am not a strict disciplinarian. I rather try and operate on the basis of getting co-operation. I want to say this though, that I would think that if the decision had gone the other way and I had then been out advocating something else that there would have been a multitude of motions passed and actions suggested against me or anyone who'd taken that position. So I would hope that those who have had the fairest of all possible opportunities to put their case and try and persuade the Party to an anti-uranium position will accept the logic of that. That does not of course mean that within the Party itself they don't have the freedom to try and move to change that. But I believe that any action outside the Party would not be proper and I don't think that the authorities of the Party would view it with favour. Now I don't say that in a threatening way, but I hope that now those who have been so active will recognise that a clear decision has been taken. It's going to be implemented and I would hope that they would accept it and I think that's what will happen.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, on immigration yesterday you told the Conference that Mr Peacock basically broke an agreement he had reached with you. Today we hear that Mr Peacock says you're lying. It doesn't augur well for the burying of an essentially very divisive issue.

P.M.: No, but what's very interesting, if you notice he said that I did that, I hoped he used the words. But then went on to concede that I wasn't. In other words that I had rung him, he concedes that. A conversation took place, but then when he realised that the figures came out that we'd changed our policy, then he couldn't get effect to his agreement - well I just leave you and the people of Australia to contemplate that answer, because he knows that the figures that emerged didn't show any change of policy. The figures that were available for anyone who wanted to study them showed nothing other than that this Government continued the policies of the previous Government. That is, that we allowed to Asian citizens that come here the same right as anyone else in respect of family union - that they've been exercising that,

P.M. cont...: that there had been a voluntary decline relatively in people coming here from other sources, and if there hadn't been the same relative taking up of the family reunion by those here from non-Asian sources. That was not change of Government policy, that was a straight continuation of bipartisanship. He knows the facts. The people of Australia increasingly understand the facts. And Mr Peacock is going to have to face up, as I said, to the dilemma that his attempt to get into the gutter via Hodgman has created for himself. And that is the position that he said that they are not in favour of reducing the number of Asian migrants. They want to restore the balance which arithmetically and logically means that they are going to have a quota concept which means more migrants, that they are saying to the Australian people no less Asians, but more non-Asians - in other words a higher migrant intake. Now as I said at the Conference it's no wonder we're waiting like Halley's Comet for the emergence of the specific policy, because he know's the dilemma that his unprincipled responses have got him into.

JOURNALIST: Could ASIO provide some transcripts to sort out this dispute that's been ... in this conversation?

P.M.: Have we got some serious questions?

JOURNALIST: On a Victorian matter, Mr Hawke, do you have an agreement from the Centre Left to support the reaffiliation of the four unions in September?

P.M.: That's an internal matter which will work itself out quite satisfactorily I believe.

JOURNALIST: As a result of the industry policy that was worked out today ... can you see the situation of the Government in terms of consultation with the unions will be setting down for various industries and manufacturing their investment pricing and employment strategy?

P.M.: No, not setting down, but I think the steel industry provides an example where in those particular circumstances out of a consultation process between the Government and the unions and the industry, you now have a greater degree of capacity for others in the industry itself to be involved in consideration of investment decisions with their employment consequences. And that's not something which has been imposed upon the industry, it's something that they've welcomed. And as I said today if you go into that industry now and talk with management they quite directly express their strong satisfaction about the new atmosphere and environment that's come out of that approach. Now I believe that that sort of thing may be able to be done and is encouraged to be done under the policies that was adopted today. The essential thing is that you're not going to have any misrepresentation in this issue about this Government's policy and its relations with industry. There's not going to be the imposition of any control or the attempt to impose planning upon industry. What's going to be done is what we've successfully shown can happen in the steel industry and in the automotive industry - something that increasingly industry itself is saying it wants to see and we'll gladly co-operate with them and with the trade unions to produce it.

JOURNALIST: During the debate on Tuesday on uranium certain left wing delegates made the statement that the ALP would lose electorally on the issue of uranium. How do you feel about those remarks by those members.

P.M.: Well, like so much of their contribution in the debate, they were wrong. I quoted the factual research material of the Party which showed, and let me repeat, a clear majority of Labor voters in favour of the policy that I'd been espousing which has now been adopted as well as a clear majority of Democrat voters and the majority of the other voters, a clear majority of women, and very importantly in respect of one central part of the argument that's been used by the left - that is you must keep uranium in the ground because this was relevant to the questions of world peace and disarmament - the overwhelming majority, of the order of 80%, saying that that was nonsense, that it was a quite separate issue. And I related to the polling that's been in the Bulletin on 29 May of this year and to all other polling that's been taken on it - the clear majority of Australian people have a clear understanding both of the question itself and of the division between the issue of uranium mining and the issue of nuclear disarmament and peace. They are manifestly separate issues. And clearly the overwhelming majority of the Australian electorate appreciate it. And I make the final point if they don't approve of the Labor Party's policy in terms of alternative Governments there's only the Liberal and National Party who would mine everything.

JOURNALIST: Do you expect to see in September the National Executive taking the four unions back into the Party?

P.M.: I give the same answer as I did to the question from Michelle Grattan. That's a matter that will be decided within the processes of the Party and I'm quite confident about the way it will be resolved.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister do you feel that you're totally bound by the Platform adopted by the Conference or will you continue if necessary to interpret policy according to changing circumstances.

P.M.: Well you notice that the Party has re-affirmed the overall resolution - that there is the Platform and the rate of implementation is a matter for the Government. It's a very sensible decision that they have confirmed. It's been there before and this Government will operate within and according to the Platform. You may notice that the Conference on every issue of significance made decisions in accordance with what I indicated I and the Government wanted. So clearly we have no problems.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke will you take advantage of Mr Shultz's visit in the next couple of days to discuss the Conference decision calling for restrictions on US warship visits.

P.M.: I have no doubt that that there will be some discussion in regard to that matter.

JOURNALIST: Do you believe that the creation of the Centre Left was an important factor in the success of the Conference, or do you think undue credit was given to them?

PM: Well, you might have noticed, as distinct from yourself, Greg, and others who spent a lot of time obviously thinking and writing about this, but I have been very relaxed about it. I am simply saying - I repeat here what I have said before - that I think the organisation of the Centre Left was useful in imposing a discipline, if you like, upon those who grouped together in that way. I have no doubt that in the absence of that disciplined organisation we still would have won. It's arguable, I think, that perhaps on some issues we may not have got the margin that we did. So I'm therefore grateful for the discipline that was exercised, but I have no doubt that the results would have been the same, perhaps the dimension on some issues would not have been as great.

JOURNALIST: Uranium, Sir. Can you suggest what would be your Government's decision if at some point in the future the French Energy Utility sought more Australian uranium at the same time as the French Government, Sir, continued with nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

PM: Well, quite clearly, we wouldn't respond positively to such approach in the hypothetical situation you put.

JOURNALIST: Was there any outcome or decision of the Conference which you would like to have seen emerge a little differently?

PM: No. Look, when you have a week's conference which passes so many platform items and resolution, obviously if I were to write every one of them they wouldn't have been written exactly the same. It would be absurd to suggest that. In a process of taking account of a range of point of views, I am very satisfied that the basic thrust on all major issues that I have been developing over very many months, and in some things in respect of uranium that I have been developing for years, has been adopted and now, in the process of having the main thrust of my position clearly endorsed, that gives me satisfaction. The fact that I might have worded some clauses and phrases differently is a matter of no concern to me at all.



JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, do you agree with the personal view of Senator Walsh, that Australia may - the Government may have to take delivery of the contracted shipments to France of yellowcake?

PM: I think we may have to do that, yes.

JOURNALIST: What is your interpretation of the resolution on visits by nuclear warships. Does it, do you think, place any practical restriction on the visits that US ships have been making to Western Australian ports, and if so, will you implement that resolution?

PM: Quite clearly the resolution is against home porting. It is saying, let's make sure that we talk with our ally the United States to ensure that visits don't constitute home porting. I am perfectly confident that that resolution enables the situation to emerge which is satisfactory to our ally, the United States and to us as a firm and committed ally of the United States.

JOURNALIST: Isn't what you said about uranium and supplies to France in breach of the Party platform?

PM: No.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, when are you likely to visit New Zealand - before or after the South Pacific Forum?

PM: When am I likely to go to New Zealand - before or after the South Pacific Forum? That's a touchy one, isn't it. I think it would be after the Forum.

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