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## PRIME MINISTER

E. & O.E. - PROOF ONLY

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PM: Ladies and gentlemen, I am sorry there has been a slight delay, but I thought it was appropriate and better for your purposes that you have a prepared statement from me. I would just point out one grammatical - I think it is the only one I can find - on the bottom of page three - the second sentence in that last paragraph - the "is" should be "are". Thank you.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, Mr Peacock makes the general charge you have closed down the Costigan Commission effectively protecting the most powerful criminals in Australia - according to Mr Peacock. He won't name names inside Parliament or outside Parliament but one person you are supposed to have protected is referred to as "Goanna" in the current issue of the National Times. "Goanna's" real name has been the subject of notorious rumour around Parliament House for days. I ask you specifically did you close down the Costigan Commission to protect "Goanna" from being investigated, particularly in reference to the funding of drug trafficking.

PM: Unequivocally no, and I am glad that question has been asked at the outset. You will notice in the statement that I have issued that I go to the fact that I had discussions with Mr Commissioner Costigan in 1983. And I put the view to him that in the limited time available to him that he should concentrate on the question of drugs. As I point out in my statement, he agreed with this and I expressed the view that I believed that Commissioner Costigan agreed with me, because he shared my view about the abomination of the drug trade and its impact on our society. And I make it clear in my statements that I find that the one area in my thinking where I have difficulty in controlling rationality when I contemplate what should happen to those who are involved in the drug traffic. There is no matter which, for intimate reasons, I feel more strongly about than this. And may I say that it would be a matter of knowledge that colleagues in my government also have reason to share this feeling. And I find it difficult to express my revulsion, as I say in my statement, about an allegation that suggests that I would in any way do anything to cover up or prevent the identification of anyone, whatever their station in life, who may be involved in this insidious and abominable traffic. I make the point to you, Peter, that I accept the rough and tumble of politics. I accept that hard statements can be made, but this suggestion that I would in any way remotely or directly or indirectly seek to cover up the identification of anyone engaged in this abomination is not getting into the gutter of politics, it is into the sewer of politics.

JOURNALIST: Sir, may I follow it up with a supplementary question, because I think we can now assume after Mr Costigan's special hearing yesterday that this material is official and represents part of the material passed from the Costigan Royal Commission to the National Crime Authority for ongoing investigation. Under the heading of "Goanna" is the reference Costin - that is the shorthand for the Costigan Commission - has investigated this allegation - referring to the "Goanna" - to a point, but is too severely constrained in time to complete it. That seems to suggest there, assuming the authenticity of that statement that Mr Costigan wants to investigate further into "Goanna's" activities in relation to the funding of drug trafficking and everything from land deals to suggestions of complicity in murder - that he has been cut off, Sir, would you care to comment on that.

PM: I certainly would care to comment, Peter. The statement makes it clear that this Government, as the previous Government - and this is a point I think that has been made in Victoria today by Mr Cain - at all points understood that the Costigan Royal Commission would come to be subsumed under the National Crime Authority when it is established. Now I want to make it clear on your point which is an important one, that all the references, including the one from which you have quoted, have been handed over to Mr Justice Stewart and his fellow Commissioners on the National Crime Authority. And so that what Mr Costigan has been examined by them and they take the view, and I have made it clear to them, that it is our wish and it is theirs - they have made it quite clear - that they will pursue all matters referred if on their judgement, which is now they are the Authority, the material warrants such pursuit. And I cannot emphasise too strongly the way in which I have said to the National Crime Authority that this is the expectation of the Government and indeed let me say this - that if there were any sense of suggestion that the material, having been handed over to the National Crime Authority were for some reason which escapes my comprehension, not pursued, then this would be a matter of the gravest concern to the Government. But let me make it clear that obviously I have no reason to believe that that would happen. And I say that because the members of the National Crime Authority - let me remind you who they are - Justice Stewart, probably the most experienced respected crime fighter in Australia, and you have in addition the two other members of the Authority - Dwyer and Mr Bingham, and I remind you Peter, those two unanimously endorsed by all the governments of Australia, irrespective of political persuasions and you will recall that in my statement I refer to the observations by Mr Redlich in his report about the National Crime Authority being appropriately placed to continue investigations - and may I just add to that report - to quote from the report. On page 48 of his report he says that "throughout its long history the debate on the configuration of the authority has been influenced by the three factors" - and you are aware of the three factors. That is the optimum means of detecting and investigating organised criminal activity. Two - the protection of civil liberties. Three - the integrity of the States and their law enforcement agencies. And he concludes on this point - "the National Crime Authority Act 84 gives genuine emphasis to all three

considerations. The Authority has the scope to maintain the initiatives developed by the Costigan Royal Commission. There are substantial safeguards within the Act to protect the rights of witnesses and those under investigation. The States and their investigative agencies are given a voice in the operation of the Authority. The Authority must now be given an opportunity to work." And that is the position of the Government and I conclude my observation, therefore by saying, Peter, all the Costigan references - including the ones you refer to - have been handed over to that properly equipped Authority. It is my expectation and earnest hope that all the matters will be thoroughly pursued. And if that should lead to prosecutions, then so be it. And it would be my hope that it happens. And, as I say in my statement, let the cards fall where they may.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, on page 5 of your statement, Sir, you say "Mr Keating has already denied completely the allegations that he suggested to the Cabinet that the Costigan Commission should be prematurely terminated." That is apropos of stopping Costigan ..... Was there any discussion by any Cabinet Minister in regard to stopping Costigan ....

PM: Absolutely no suggestion. And indeed I trust that you know me well enough to know that I would repudiate any such suggestion. I repeat, and I can't emphasise it strongly enough, that when it comes to the sorts of issues that here involved and the one that I regard and I think all Australians would share my view - is the question of drugs - there can be and there must be no protection of any person or any group of persons. The dangers that this insidious traffic constitutes for the well-being of this society is such that it is preposterous that there can be any barrier put in the way of the pursuit of those involved in this deadly traffic.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, given the depth of your feelings on this subject, may I ask, do you intend to take legal action against any person who has made allegations?

PM: Peter, I am glad that question has been asked. I think there has been a misunderstanding of what I thought I said very clearly. Let me repeat it so that there can be, I hope, no further misunderstanding. You will recall that I said I had been placed in an impossible situation. You will understand now from my further elaboration the depth of my feelings about this issue. I can't express the revulsion that I feel that there could be any allegation that I would do anything to protect anyone in respect of the pursuit of those involved in drugs. Now, the allegations have been made. Now, I obviously do not want to adopt the position which is going to prevent any people making statements or producing evidence which is relevant in this area. Now I have not instructed my solicitors to look at this matter. I have not. I have proceeded on the basis that although it seems to have a fast disappearing basis, I have proceeded in the hope that Mr Peacock will recognise the enormity of the allegation that he has made against me - that I am a crook, that I associate with criminals, and I am directed by them. I have explained why I have the depth of the revulsion

that I have on this matter. So I am not taking action. I will let this matter go up until the Parliament and in the hope that by then Mr Peacock will have the honour and the decency to retract, because, as I say, there is not a skerrick of substance in what he has done. And I simply have to say this, though, that if after that - after the Parliament - when he has had the full opportunity which I have allowed to him, if after the Parliament he should make these statements again, outside the Parliament, I am not prepared to deny, not only to myself, but to my family, the protection which I believe they are entitled to under the law.

JOURNALIST: Don't you think it makes something of a mockery of our political system if politicians feel inhibited in making statements about one another simply because there is a threat of legal action hanging over them?

PM: I thought I had made it clear that I had not instructed my solicitors and I have expressed the hope that Mr Peacock will retract and I still have that hope. But I want to say this - that we already have the demonstration that the people concerned - Mr Peacock, Mr Steele Hall are prepared to fabricate demonstrable untruths. I refer to the statement in the Parliament by Mr Steele Hall with the obvious support of Mr Peacock, that I had Mr Barron of my staff go to The Age and seek to have a story suppressed. Now that it totally untrue and Mr Burns has repudiated it and destroyed that lie. Now it seems to be implicit in what you are saying that to have these lies just being allowed to go on and on - and I repeat that in public life you cannot, it seems to me, entirely abandon the rights that you have, because it is not only a matter affecting yourself. You don't cease to be a husband. You don't cease to be a father. My children and my wife have a right to be protected in this matter but I trust it will not be necessary.

JOURNALIST: Mr. Hawke, in that context, were you upset particularly at the National Times story about your daughter?

PM: Of course I was because like any father I love my daughter. I trust her. And she was completely exonerated by the processes of the law. I had no contact with the Judge or anyone involved in it and yet you have this insinuation that affects her. Of course I'm upset.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, when will we have an election date?

PM: What I said before, that I will be making a statement on that matter at the earliest possible opportunity. I gave the approximate time that I would be speaking on that and I adhere to that.

JOURNALIST: Getting back to the Parliament. Should Mr Peacock, if he is going to continue this, name names. It is getting back to Peter Bowers point where it would seem that some have been bandied around the community lately .....

PM: I'm sorry, I didn't catch that.

JOURNALIST: Should Mr Peacock if he wishes to pursue this Mr Hawke, get into a position where he actually starts naming names. I refer to Peter Bowers question.

PM: I think the point, I an, is well covered by that statement on page 48 of Mr Redlich's Report, where he says there are three considerations, and three valid considerations. The most effective pursuit of criminal activity, the civil liberties of individuals, and the co-operation of the States. It seems to me that all of those points are important and clearly if anyone is to be investigated - whoever they may be, then it is important firstly that those investigations be able to proceed in an unfettered way and in a way most likely to bring to justice whoever should be brought to justice. Secondly the rights of individuals must be protected as Mr Redlich observed. And I think it is the view of all those who are involved in these matters, including Mr Costigan, I would think the National Crime Authority, and Mr Temby, that nothing should be done that will inhibit either the capacity of the relevant authorities to pursue those who should be pursued and secondly to inhibit the rights of individuals. And it has been the view of all concerned up to this point that that will mean that particular names of those who maybe subject to investigation should in further processes should not be named. And I would hope that those involved on both sides of politics in this matter will not take action which will either place some inhibition on the capacity of the Authority to pursue those who should be pursued or to inhibit the rights of individuals. That is -as far as the Government is concerned, I made it clear in my statement before that we will be advised by Mr Costigan and by the National Crime Authority, by the Federal Commissioner of Police, and Mr Temby, I would think. Those are the sorts of people we would be advised by as to whether names should be released. We will take the proper- and strictly adhere to such advice about the naming of names and I would expect that the obvious correctness of that would be appreciated by everyone.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, what do you think the electoral effect of this whole issue is going to be?

PM: Let me say this - that I said before that there is no-one in public life whose life has been more of an open book than mine. I think the people of Australia know me. I think they respect me. They won't always agree with everything I have - every opinion I have expressed - but I beleive that they will be appalled by this totally unsustainable attack upon me. It is already obvious publicly and we also have other indications that not only has there been this public condemnation of Mr Peacock in the media, by a range of people, but there is obviously an enormous amount disquiet within his own Party. I believe that this will work against the Liberal and National Parties.

JOURNALIST: So you think the Government will actually gain in the electorate?

PM: Yes, but it is not a way I want to gain.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, can I seek a clarification. Are you saying that you still consider legal action if Mr Peacock only gives a repeat of the allegations outside Parliament, Or if he fails to ... withdraw...

PM: I thought I had made it quite clear. It amazes me that you don't understand what I said. Let me repeat it so that you will. I said I have not instructed my solicitors to look at this matter. I said I had done this in the hope, which may be a disappearing hope - I have done it in the hope by the time Parliament resumes Mr Peacock will have the decency and the honour to retract. I have said for the reasons to which I have referred, and I apologize that I am emotional about it, but I have said that should Mr Peacock after the Parliament resumes not do that and repeat again outside the Parliament those allegations which are totally without substance, then I am not going to deny to myself and to my family the rights to protect ourselves. Now it seems to me that that is crystal clear.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, do you know the identity of the "Goanna", and if so, have you ever met or had dealings with that person and was the "Goanna's" name one of those deleted from the Costigan correspondence which you tabled in Parliament?

PM: I am not going to the question of individuals in the way that you put it and I thought I would have made it clear from my answer to this point the reasons why I am not going to it either directly or indirectly in the way you have put. The important point is this - that I say again, I think I have said it a number of times today, I repeat without equivocation that this Government and this Prime Minister in particular will do nothing to protect anyone whether that person is known or not known to me, whatever the station in life of that person. If that person or persons on the basis of the decision of the National Crime Authority with the material referred to it believes that a prosecution must follow, then not only will there be no attempt to protect any such person, but should I form the judgement that there has been any attempt, at any point by anyone to inhibit the pursuit of such person or persons, known or unknown to me, then all the force that I have to bear in my office will be brought to bear on that situation.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, do you think you gave Mr Peacock a tactical advantage by waiting a week before you responded to the substance of the allegations .... in fact last Thursday.

PM: I would have hoped that it be clear that I'm not concerned with tactical advantages in this matter, views have been expressed to call the Parliament back immediately and sought to take a tactical advantage in that way. I calmly came to the view that the processes of Government should proceed, members of Parliament, including Ministers had made their plans for that two week break. Ministers are overseas on important government business, members on both sides of the House are obviously engaged in important matters in their electorates, and it seemed to me appropriate to not do anything unusual in that respect. I want to say this, Greg, that I had the hope that on calmer reflection Mr Peacock would do the honourable and the obviously honourable thing. And he has been given time to do that. He hasn't done it. And may I interpolate, just as a matter of logic, he has made these charges and not it

appears according to his statement that if I say what I have already said about the making publicly available of the Costigan Report then he would withdraw the charges. A remarkable thing. I am a crook. I associate with criminals - all in quotes from Mr Peacock. He alleges I am a crook, I associate with criminals and I am directed by criminals. He makes those allegations. They cease to be true if I do what I already said I would do. Now what I have tried to do is to play this matter which I think you can understand affects me deeply - I have tried to play it in a reasonable way to allow Mr Peacock the opportunity of a retraction. It is not a question of tactics or tactical advantage.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, during the week the debate on this whole issue has gone up some pretty extraordinary alleyways. One of them was that Andrew Peacock would disappear into the ether and Malcolm Fraser would return. What do you think of that?

PM: Well, I don't want to compound the problems, self inflicted, of the Liberal Party, I simply say this that the leadership of the Liberal Party is a matter for them. There have been a range of observations by people within the Liberal Party and outside about the necessity for change. I will deal with whoever is the leader of the Party. I must say, if I can put this interpolation in, I felt a sense of some frustration that Mr Fraser resigned. I would have liked to have had him across the table as Leader of the Opposition. And, ...

JOURNALIST: So to speak.

PM: So to speak, yes; I take your point. No, just a minute I haven't finished. But let me say this - there has been under his successor a departure from principles in a number of matters. I have referred, for instance particularly, to the attitudes towards South Africa. Mr Fraser would not have departed from that principle and I believe that Mr Fraser would not have descended into the sewers in the way that his successor has. But I repeat let the Liberal Party make whatever decision it will, this Government under my leadership will go on with conducting the affairs, the important affairs, of this country in an efficient and an honourable fashion.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, given that, you've said that you would not table but make available the Costigan Royal Commission Report when it became available even during the election campaign, but that Parliament will not be sitting ...

PM: I said should Parliament not be sitting.

JOURNALIST: Yeah. What form of protection will there be as against parliamentary privilege for the release of that report. Will names therefore have to be deleted?

PM: Well, I made it clear, just picking up the latter part of your question first. That whether the Parliament was sitting or not, you would have to consider the question of names for all the reasons that I have put. I mean this has been a fact in the past, it's a requirement of the authorities who have the responsibility of proceeding with prosecutions and investigations, that they don't want their capacities inhibited by identification. And you've also got the question of the rights of individuals concerned. So whether the Parliament was sitting or not, that's a question separate to the Parliament that depends upon those considerations that I alluded to. But going to your first point - that is a matter that we have to take into account. That's a matter on which we will be advised by the authorities that I have mentioned too and the Attorney General's Department to ensure that the protection of individuals, the proper protection of individuals, and the proper protection of the investigating authorities is not inhibited. And we will be advised on that and we take the advice given to us.



JOURNALIST: The makers of Simon Townsend's Wonder World, sir, have announced that they are planning a mini-series on your life, the Life of Bob, how do you feel about that and how do you think it would rate.

PM: How do I feel about it. Well, as I say Laurie, I've said earlier, I guess there's no-one in public life who has been more of an open book. I have prepared, I have been prepared to allow it out, warts and all, as I have used. I haven't addressed my mind to this other sort of aspect that you have talked about so I can't give you an answer to it. But as to the latter part of your question, how do I think it would rate, I understand that the authorised biography is sold rather well, it may suggest that there may be some interest. But that'll be for others to decide.

JOURNALIST: Sir, do you think there's an actor who could play the title role?

PM: I haven't got the time, nor the lines now to cover the earlier period.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, in view of Mr Costigan's comments about the powers of the National Crimes Authority, will the Government give any consideration to strengthening the National Crimes Authority.

PM: Well, what you must appreciate of it that the process of arriving at the National Crimes Authority has been one which has involved the political processes of this Parliament, discussions with the States, because at all points it has been understood that if we're going to have the maximum efficiency you have got to have a structure and a system which will ensure the full co-operation of the States not only as governments but of the police forces of the states. I think the statement on page 48 of Mr Redlich's report sums it up, that he says well all the debate, you will recall the actual words that he uses that I read out, he says "throughout its long history the debate on the configuration has been influenced by the three factors", I won't read them again, but it has been influenced by those three factors. And he says that the Act as it stands now gives genuine emphasis to all those considerations and he lists them and then says "the Authority must now be given an opportunity to work". So Mr Costigan, for whom I have publicly, as you know already, expressed the greatest admiration for what he has done. He has his views and his views are entitled to respect. He participated in the seminar that was held in the Parliament. His views have been expressed, the views of others have been expressed and I think that Mr Redlich has put it correctly. There has been a debate. The Chairman of the Authority has been asked directly by me, as I say in my statement, is there anything more the Government can do, and he said no, there is no more the Government can do. I asked him, will it be an effective authority to fight organised crime, he said yes it will be. Now it seems to me that having gone through all those processes where there are differences of emphases, let's see if it can work. I am confident that the community will respect

Mr Justice Stewart's assessment. I believe they will respect the assessment of Mr. Max Bingham and of Mr. Dwyer. Now that's the view that I have expressed. What I want to do now is to see that it can get on with its job.

JOURNALIST: Sir, what do you say to Mr Peacock's suggestion that the hiatus between the Costigan Commission finishing its investigation in June and the National Crimes Authority being fully started sometime after the end of October. Will it lead to the trail going cold, as Mr Peacock suggested, the investigations into the ...

PM: Well, may I say this and I remain as cool as I can about it. I would have thought that the community would place greater reliance on the judgement of Mr Justice Stewart and Mr Bingham and Mr Dwyer in this respect than they would upon the allegations of a man who has been totally discredited.

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