



52

PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND
DERRYN HINCH ON 3AW TUESDAY OCTOBER 9 1984

DH On the issue of early elections would you give a guarantee now that if you win in December as is expected, your next government would go its full term?

PM Yes particularly in the light Derryn of what I have been saying is that, we are not just having this early election that you keep referring to, what I am doing is saving the people of Australia an extra election. Now I want to come fully to answer your question. But what's got to be understood is that under the constitution, we have to have by April next, an election for $\frac{1}{2}$ the Senate. We must do that under the Constitution. Therefore what I am doing is to save the people an extra election, that you would have to have after that if the House of Representatives went on instead of two elections which will cost, which would have cost \$49million I'm bringing the 2 together at a cost of 30 million. By having the House of Representatives and the $\frac{1}{2}$ Senate election together that will be the 23rd time that this has been done in our history, but in doing that I am also putting to the people a referendum and this distinguishes me from what has happened in the past, I'm saying to people here's a referendum, I'm asking you to vote for simultaneous elections so that no Prime Minister in the future will be able to throw the electoral cycle out of kilter by causing unnecessary early elections. If the people support that referendum it will mean that a Prime Minister will know that he will have to take the Senate out with him. There will be no advantage in trying to break the cycle. He won't be able to do it under the more

2..... cont

constitution. So I think that the Australian People are now for the first time being given the opportunity of unequivocally getting this thing sorted out for all time in^{to} the future

DH Is it totally altruistic, or is it also because you feel that this is a good time to maximise your chances?

PM We'd be in as good or better shape next year, but it is the case that the normal pattern of having the half senate election has been at the end of the preceding year. It has normally been held at this sort of period and in this case I have gone as early as we can under the new laws and part of my reason for going early is that the business community, many of them, have made representations to me, they say, we know there needs to be an early election we are saying to you go as early as possible because they say to me, and it is interesting Derryn just how widely this view is put by business, that the thread of an election hanging in the air by having it very late in the year or early in the new year, they say disrupts the Christmas retail trade so get it out of the way December the first is as soon as we can have it, it is there, it is done, and particularly if the Australian people will vote for the referendum, simultaneous elections, then we can look forward to future stability, particularly stability.

DH Malcolm Fraser used to talk about calling an election to end the speculation which he had started and on this election your speculation, personally seemed to start about last Christmas.

PM It was not speculation it was... I don't know what I can do to satisfy you I didn't speculate, I said this is what we are going to do. I'll tell the people not at the last minute, I've said I'll tell you as soon as possible so that the business community
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3..... cont

electorate can know. Now I don't know how you can ever be satisfied I mean you are saying that I fuel speculation, I said early this is what is going to happen, I won't hang around until the last minute Mr Fraser did, and just spring it. Close the role so that thousands and thousands of people couldn't get on the role
DH Thats true

PM We've had a campaign to urge people to get on the role. This is the thing which distinguishes us from all our predecessors. We want everyone to have the opportunity to know there is going to be an election not only get it out of the way but importantly for the future to say now you are not going to have unnecessary elections foisted on you in the future.

DH Are you concerned or embarrassed, perhaps by the fact that while you have got an election campaign now virtually underway you have still got a Senate committee hearing the Justice Murphy affair material, you've got the Costigan report to be tabled, these things can/will end up perhaps getting involved as election issues.

PM No, not only not embarrassed, but quite positive about them. I've made it clear and I think you accept, I've got no reason to believe that you don't that I have said in respect of what ever investigations going on into any issue or any people, I've said and I mean it let the cards fall where they may. I'm not in the business of protecting anyone or any interests and that is my position as far as the Costigan Commission report is concerned I will ensure that that report is published as fully as it can be on the basis of the advice from Mr Costigan himself, from the National Crimes Authority, from the director of public prosecutions
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4....cont

from the head of the Australian Federal Police and from the Attorney General's department. They will all advise on what paths should not be published so that prosecution will not be prejudiced or the rights of individuals prejudiced and on the basis only of their recommendations as to what shouldn't be published I'll see that the whole of the report is published. I've got nothing to fear from it, the Government has nothing to fear from it, on the contrary.

DH Would this be published before the election?

PM Of course it will be.

DH The president of the ALP Mr Wran, his name is coming up in evidence that Senate Committee enquiry, does that cause you some embarrassment with an election coming up?

PM On the contrary, I have said, I repeat on your programme, that I have no evidence at all and have not had at any stage, any evidence which establishes any impropriety on the part of Mr Wran and I don't know about you but I am never going to be part of the process of smear, and innuendo and guilt by allegation that is an extraordinary danger in our society. I'd never been one to run away from friends or colleagues on the basis that they are being smeared, or allegations are being made against them. Now there is nothing at all of any evidence of any impropriety on Mr Wran's part and any-one should be very careful of making any allegations against him.

DHI agree with that, but he has, Mr Wran has made some, what I would consider to be extraordinary and dangerous comments for a Premier over the possible future of Mr Briese the chief stipendiary magistrate in NSW who is currently under oath at a Senate committee more

5..... cont

hearing.

PM Derryn, there can be obviously arguments as to whether that was a wise thing for Mr Wran to say. But I have been concerned to go to the wider point, people have grabbed hold of that and then used it as a peg to make general allegations against Mr Wran. That's what I'm not going to be in. I accept that there can be legitimate arguments as to whether that was a wise thing to say.

DH I saw you on the Willesee program last night. Mike Willesee raised the questions about your family and I think you said something along the lines about them being perhaps being, part of an election campaign argument of some sort and you said only disreputable people would raise those questions and would get involved in those questions. Is that right ?

PM.... Oh I don't remember my exact words Mike did go to it. I've said that I believe that the events of recent weeks have once again confirmed the continuing faith which I have had in the wisdom and good judgement of the Australian electorate. They don't like the process of smear and allegation, personalisation of issues, they've made that quite clear. Couldn't have made it clearer. I said in respect of that issue that the children of non public figures who have suffered these particular sorts of tragediesthe attitude of the community is that the major issue is to see how these unfortunate people should be able to be rehabilitated, get away from their problem. That's what the attitude of the community is. I think rightly so.

DH With respect Prime Minister, I think that one of the attitudes of the community as well and followed by calls on programs such as mine and mail we have received is that the community, a large more

6 cont

number of the community also feel that it was a legitimate question to ask you as Prime Minister where your daughter got the money for her drug addiction and for how long she had that drug addiction?

PM Well you can say that that is legitimate. I have made the point publicly when that question has been raised or alluded to that as far as we are concerned if the police, if the law enforcement agencies have any questions that they want to direct to anyone in the family then thats what should happen and thats where it stands.

DH Have the police not asked you any questions?

PM No and let me say this, I am not going to subject my family or myself to interrogation by you or by anyone other than the police. Its a matter for the police, its their decision if they want to ask these questions and thats for them.

DH Were you tempted, I'm sure you were, as a father to go after the pushers, the scum of the earth who supplied the drugs to your daughter?

PM Look, I think I have made it clear, and I don't want to have either my intelligence or the intelligence of your listeners insulted by suggesting that I haven't got the deepest revulsion against those engaged in drug trafficking. I said in a press conference that I find it hard to control my rationality when I think about people who profit from this trade, now thats quite clear. I'm not going to go into some detailed examination of what the feeling is that I have about these people,
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DH I admit I don't like having to ask these questions.

PM You say you don't like it Derryn, I'm not going to get into a question of what you like or don't like doing. You've made your judgements about how you conduct yourself. That's for you. All I'm saying to you is that I'm not going to assist your processes of examination of my feelings about these things. What my attitude is, is clear, it is the same as any parents would be. One of total repugnance. I regard it quite frankly as an insult to my intelligence and frankly to the intelligence of your listeners that there should be any implication that I have other than total repugnance of people engaged in the drug scene.

DH I don't make that inference at all.

PM I don't care whether you want to go on and say you do or do not want to make an inference. I am simply saying to you it's a matter for Derryn Hinch's judgement what he does about disclosures, what he does about prying into people's feelings, but all I'm saying to you is that I'm not going to assist you for whatever reasons you have in your mind about trying to probe my feelings about this. My feelings are manifest and well known, I'd leave it at that.

DH Were you aware Mr Prime Minister of Mr Costigan's family problems?

PM Not directly, no I wasn't. But I became aware after your episode. That knowledge was in the hands of a number of people in the media who took a different view to you.

DH.... Doesn't it just show

PM Let me just say to you... I'm not going to be involved in an analysis of your action, why you did what you did, that's a matter for you, a matter for judgement by others as to whether it was appropriate. I simply say to you and I think you ought to know that when I say something I mean it. I am not going to get further involved in an analysis of what you have done about this or not.
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8 cont

That's for others to make their judgement. I'm not pursuing this matter any further down the track.

DH Well I think, it sounds like you have made your judgement.

PM I may or may not have made my judgement. But I don't want to intrude that judgement into the issue, because I happen to think that 99% of the Australian people now that we are into an election want to talk about other issues as to whether Derryn Hinch did or not do the right thing in this issue.

DH That wasn't the point I was trying to lead you to. The point I was trying to ask you...

PM Derryn, what you may or may not be trying to lead me to, all I can go on is the area on which you have now spent a great deal of time on. I am not going to talk any more about personal problems that exist in my family or in Mr Costigan's family or Derryn Hinch's actions in these matters. Now I am not going to talk anymore about it.

DH Right Mr Prime Minister. What do you see, a totally separate issue, as the main issue of the campaign that will get you re-elected?

PM Well it is quite clear, and that is that the Australian people in this election are faced with alternatives. They are faced with going back to what they had at the beginning of '83 the policies which produced the disaster that was Australia at the end of 7 years of government which Mr Peacock was a leading minister of for nearly the whole time, of which Mr Howard and Mr Sinclair were leading ministers. Their policies produced the most divided and divisive and economically stagnant Australia since the depression. I promised Australia a better course, I said, I offer National reconciliation and on that basis, economic recovery. We have produced that in a spectacularly successful way that's the issue.

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9 cont

D H Does it worry you that some people who voted for you last time round will fall by the way-side this time, over such things as the uranium issue or things like that.

PM Well I can go on if you are talking about "some people will fall by the wayside" if you want to say "some people will fall by the wayside" all I can say is that comparing the election in March '83 with today, it is clear that we have a greater level of support now than we had then. So we may have lost some, we seem to have gained more.

DH Will you concentrate much of your campaign in Victoria? Where there is apparently the most marginal seats?

PM Oh Victoria is the second largest state with the second largest number of seats and any political leader who didn't pay a great deal of attention to Victoria would be quite stupid. Whatever I may be I'm not stupid.

DH True, that is quite true. Mr Prime Minister, I know you haven't got any more time, I thank you for your time, and I presume we will talk again in the campaign.

PM Certainly Derryn

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