



## PRIME MINISTER

E. & O.E. - PROOF ONLY

INTERVIEW WITH JANA WENDT FOR 60 MINUTES  
14 OCTOBER 1984

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, right now you are very clearly the ALP's biggest electoral asset. There was a time when Neville Wran shared that distinction. These days it seems that Neville Wran has turned into an electoral liability. Are you happy to fight an election shoulder to shoulder with Neville Wran?

PM: I have made clear right throughout this year that I stand by Neville Wran and whether it is Neville Wran or anyone else, my stance in public life has been crystal clear. If I have friends and colleagues I never walk away from them on the basis that there are smears and allegations unsubstantiated against them. My friends and colleagues have had my unquestioned loyalty unless and until there is some substantiated and proven issue of impropriety or misbehaviour. Now that is not the case with Neville Wran.

JOURNALIST: Do you support him 110%.

PM: Of course I do. Loyalty and friendship doesn't mean anything if when a person is under attack and those allegations aren't substantiated you walk away and distance yourself because some of the mud has stuck. Let proper processes be undertaken and I said let the cards fall where they may. It won't matter whether a person who is a close friend or a colleague of mine, whatever status or station in life, if they are proved guilty of impropriety then so be it. They will receive no protection from me, but until that has been done, they will not lose my loyalty.

JOURNALIST: Is that blind loyalty or political pragmatism?

PM: It is human decency. Once a society allows itself to get to the stage of McCarthyism taking over where a person is going to have to prove their innocence where you have to walk away from people because allegations are made against them, then this society will be significantly diminished. And I am not going to have any part of assisting that process?

JOURNALIST: You acknowledged a moment ago there was mud flying albeit in your eyes unjustified in the direction of Mr Wran. Is there just a possibility that some of that mud might fly past Mr Wran to you?

PM: There's no evidence of it you see, you political commentators not intentionally of course, but I think you don't have sufficient regard for the intelligence and perspicacity of the electorate. The electorate had the opportunity of judging me over many years and my integrity and they know that there is no question about my integrity. They know that I am an honest man.

JOURNALIST: Mr Wran made some comments about Mr Briese and his evidence given before the Senate, now two of your Senators said that it was better if Mr Wran had not made those comments, to put it bluntly, if he'd shut up about it. Now did you support those Senators at the time?

PM: Now it wasn't a question of me supporting them. People in the the political process, tend to make comments on the statements that others make.

JOURNALIST: Do you agree with them?

PM: I take the view that perhaps it would have been wiser if Mr Wran hadn't said what he said.

JOURNALIST: I guess it boils down to the fact where people ask themselves why should a rising star like Bob Hawke ...

PM: I am still rising am I?

JOURNALIST: Perhaps you are there, perhaps you have risen. Why should a risen star like Bob Hawke be seen shoulder to shoulder with a fading star like Neville Wran?

PM: Well, you may say they are grasping that but <sup>again</sup> I make the point that the Australian electorate, the ordinary people out there in viewing land, are much more intelligent than you give them credit for. They happen to know the simple fact that Neville Wran is the National President of my Party. I am the Prime Minister of this country and the Leader of that Party and they understand that we have stood together, and they understand my nature. And I have explained that in earlier questions. I do not walk away from friends and colleagues because they have been subject to McCarthyist smears and innuendoes.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, only a few days after the announcement of the election date, your Government apologised for comments that your deputy made about the Senate Enquiry into the conduct of Justice Lionel Murhphy. Did you carpet Bowen for that?

PM: I don't think carpet is the right word. I did have discussions with Lionel and he shared my view that the interpretation could be there casting doubts upon the members of the Committee and he very willingly with my concurrence issued a statement that night. And I believe that is honourable and indeed the House the next day when he made that clear without question accepted it.

JOURNALIST: It led however several editorial writers to say that, for instance, Mr Bowen's comments had led your government into a deep political hole. Now were they wrong?

PM: Of course they were wrong. Where is the hole. I mean, the issue was dead within 24 hours - some hole.

JOURNALIST: In the 1980 election Malcolm Fraser successfully exploited the tax issue and Messrs Peacock and Howard look as though they are going to try and do the same thing. Do you believe that your government is vulnerable in that area?

PM: On the contrary. I hope they try and make a political issue because it's a winner for us and a loser for them.

JOURNALIST: The Liberal Party's ... strength appears to be to use fear tactics about capital gains tax, wealth tax or death duties. Can you put an end to that type of story?

PM: I have already. I have said quite clearly that it is agreed across the political spectrum that there must be a form of the tax system.

JOURNALIST: Surely, though, one way to put an end to the scare-mongering of the Liberal Party is to say, well, there will be no capital gains tax in the next term of my Government. There will be no death duties.

PM: No, what the Australian people expect is not that governments or Oppositions try and play this for short term political gain which is what you are suggesting to me.

JOURNALIST: Wouldn't they like a guarantee that there will be no such thing?

PM: No, what the people want is a guarantee that this government will continue to make economic decisions on the same basis as we have up until this point. That is what they want. That is what they will get.

JOURNALIST: You don't think there would be a unanimous sigh of relief if you said to me now there would be no capital gains tax in my next term of office.

PM: I don't know whether there would be a unanimous sigh of relief. I think that the people would not like me abandoning the process which has turned this economy around from stagnancy to now being the highest, fastest growing economy in the world.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, your family chose to open up a very personal ..... talking about the problems of your daughter and son-in-law. Politics aside, what affect did that have on Rosslyn and Matthew's physical rehabilitation.

PM: I'm not going to speak on that .... in this respect there was a contract. I have made it clear that there was a contract of their initiation. They wanted said what was said by Hazel. And that is it.

JOURNALIST: Would you say as a whole that your family is strong as a result of Mrs Hawke having made that statement?

PM: Yes I do.

JOURNALIST: In the case of Commissioner Frank Costigan, the Costigan family had no choice, in the case of their son. His problems were boradcast on Melbourne radio.

PM: They certainly had no choice after what was done.

JOURNALIST: Commissioner Costigan expressed a concern about his son after that case was made public. Do you share that concern? Do you understand his concern?

PM: Yes .....

JOURNALIST: Would you think that his son was fair game for the media?

PM: No I didn't.

JOURNALIST: Mr Costigan and his Commission were publicly condemned recently and you and your Ministers did not appear exactly to leap to Commisssioner Costigan's defence. Why not?

PM: Because Mr Costigan himself would not have thought it appropriate that we as a government entered into that public debate.

JOURNALIST: You don't think that was a case of smear and innuendo in .... to Mr Costigan?

PM: The person concerned entered a rejcoinder, not unprompted, as it were, by an intervening event. It was not the work of Mr Costigan. It was the publication of some of that material in the National Times and don't let's be elyptical about it. We are talking about Mr Packer. Mr Packer made a decision to make a statement. Now, that was his decision.

JOURNALIST: Mr Packer made a statement that was severe condemnation of Commissioner Costigan.

PM: Yes, and what I am saying. It was not appropriate for us to enter into that issue. I have over the last few years, since Mr Costigan has been going, been very explicit in my praise of the work of Mr Commissioner Costigan in the area of the tax avoidance industry. Now when an issue like this arises it is clearly not the appropriate, nor would Commissioner Costigan I believe expect me or the government to intervene in that issue. I assume that Mr Costigan in his final report will address himself to some of these issues and it is appropriate that ..... it would be quite improper for government to intervene in that way.

JOURNALIST: On a personal level -- Mr Packer's statement - did it surprise you that it was made?

PM: I think it surprised many people. It was a very difficult decision for him. It's not confined to Mr Packer - for anyone in that situation - a difficult decision.

JOURNALIST: But it does literally put the Costigan Commission and Mr Packer at public odds, doesn't it?

PM: It certainly does, yes.

JOURNALIST: You have refused to appear on this program in a debate with Mr Peacock and you have even appeared to be coy about a public debate with him. Isn't he good enough to debate with?

PM: I debate with him frequently in the Parliament. And the runs are on the board, if I can put it there. Everyone knows what the score is in those debates. So it is a nonsense to suggest that I'm worried about debating with Mr Peacock. I have simply said that given the way in which I think he has demeaned the position by the sort of tactics he adopted we just have to address our minds to - whether we in the course of the campaign have a debate, or something equivalent to a debate. We will address our minds to that at the appropriate time.

JOURNALIST: When will that be?

PM: The appropriate time may be next week or the week after. It is one of the things we are thinking about.

JOURNALIST: For you, there will obviously be a lot of political satisfaction if the polls are right and your party does romp in. Will there be any personal satisfaction in defeating and possibly destroying Andrew Peacock?

PM: I don't get any personal satisfaction out of seeing an individual hurt. I mean I play the political game tough in the sense of issues. And if I think a person is wrong and doing something improper I will attack that hard. But once I have won, Jana, I don't like seeing people being ground into the dust. Let me say this, I hope and expect to win the election and win it well and that will mean, in that sense, a victory for me, and a defeat for Mr Peacock. But I hope the opportunity will be there for Mr Peacock to have some satisfaction in public life in one way or another.

ENDS.