



PRIME MINISTER

E. & C.E. - PROOF ONLY

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JOURNALIST: Have you been speaking to Mr Hayden at all this morning?

PM: Not this morning, no.

JOURNALIST: Or last night at all?

PM: Oh, I could have been.

JOURNALIST: What about the possibility of a Cabinet re-shuffle?

PM: Not on —

JOURNALIST: What about a domestic portfolio for Mr Hayden?

PM: No, look. I love the Australian political media, as you know. They are delightful people. They have this tendency which, sort of, sparks up occasionally to beat-up, is the phrase. And this is a real beat-up.

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O'NEILL: yesterday that there would be a re-shuffle.

PM: I was talking about now. Well, it's not on.

O'NEILL: The re-shuffle is still on by the end of the year?

PM: It may be. I mean, the question that annoys me - that because you get asked a question here you get a great beat-up about re-shuffle. And I'm saying it is not on now. I may be looking at it at the end of the year, but I'm just not going to have a situation where because I respond to a question from a regional person who has got an interest in Mr Hayden, and I say, well yes, I might be looking at it. Then I get faced with this beat-up story about, you know, re-shuffle.

O'NEILL: I just wanted to clarify it.

PM: Yes, I know. I wasn't having a go at you, but that is my reaction.

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HARVEY: So it's a possibility, not a probability?

PM: Yes, it is something that I would think any Prime Minister at the end of the year in reviewing what has happened, will look at. And if the situation were there that there were a pressing desire on the part of someone, and I'm not saying there is on the part of Mr Hayden - I want to make it quite clear - there is no pressure or suggestion from Mr Hayden about this in any sense at all before me. And I put it toughly like that because I think people do over-react a bit.
