



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS CONFERENCE, YOUTH ACCESS CENTRE,
LIVERPOOL - 17 JANUARY 1989

E & OE - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: How do you feel about that reception you got today?

PM: The reception from the people inside was marvellous. I take no notice of those outside.

JOURNALIST: Do you think you're going to be stuck with it through the election campaign though?

PM: Well it doesn't worry me if I am. I mean that's reflecting upon the people who - in the Australian vernacular what's happened, those people picked a fight, they lost it and they're behaving very badly. Now that's how it's perceived by the Australian people. I take no notice of that performance at all.

JOURNALIST: They say the fight's not over.

PM: Well it may not be for them.

JOURNALIST: It sounds like you're speaking as if the pilot issue is still a vote winner perhaps for the Hawke Government.

PM: I'm not thinking of it as a vote winner or a vote loser. It's a non-event. It is a non-event. I mean I take no notice of it whatsoever. If they want to dissipate their energies like this well that's up to them. It's a democratic country.

JOURNALIST: Were you pleased by the poll the Herald printed this morning?

PM: Well yes but I don't get carried away by polls. The honest thing obviously to say is any politician prefers to be in front in the polls. I mean you'd be silly to deny that -

JOURNALIST: (inaudible)

PM: Just let me finish. So I'm happy that we're in front on that. But I don't get carried away by it. I have been confident without being complacent all along. I think that the - as I was saying here today in opening this Youth Access Centre with Peter Duncan - that the people ... going to be carried away by platitudes that come from the conservatives about their concern with families. They had their chance. They had seven years in office and they just threw the kids of the families onto the unemployment scrapheap. They denied them education. They denied them training. What we've been doing is providing them with jobs, providing them with education, providing them with training - the real things that the young people of this country need. And we're going to keep on doing that and will keep on doing it. I just am confident that the people will make the appropriate judgement on the facts.

JOURNALIST: What's your response to Mr Howard's policy yesterday?

PM: Mr Howard's policy? I'm not aware of Mr Howard's. There's been a palace coup again has there? A palace coup. There was no policy yesterday. I mean ... put that out months ago. Nothing new.

JOURNALIST: Can you tell us the outcome of yesterday's talks on the logging issue?

PM: No, what I did was to have talks with Mr Kerin and Senator Cook and Senator Richardson. And on the basis of those talks Senator Cook went and had discussions with Mr Causley. Those were preliminary discussions. They are still going on. I hope that out of those discussions we'll get a sensible and agreed outcome which means that we can get a proper balance between the responsibility that both governments have for protecting the environment and also trying to ensure that the employment opportunities are maintained. I think that the discussions that were held yesterday, those preliminary discussions, may lead us to that position. I hope so.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, back on the opinion poll. It did show an erosion, or a potential erosion of seats for the Labor Party in Victoria. Are you worried about the union dispute going on down there that that could exacerbate that?

PM: I would hope it wouldn't go on. I mean obviously again the honest answer is to say that a continuation of that dispute couldn't be helpful. But I believe that it will be resolved fairly quickly from what I've been told.

JOURNALIST: The Liberals have been getting quite a lot of coverage recently. Do you feel as though they've got a head start in the campaign?

PM: No. Well that's a judgement that they will have to make. It doesn't seem to be doing them very much good. But they'll make their judgements about how they conduct themselves and their timing. I'll make my judgement about how I conduct myself and what our pace and pattern of campaigning is. That's the way it should be.

JOURNALIST: If the Papua New Guinean Government asks Mr Beazley for military assistance while he's over there, do you think Australia should be giving it?

PM: That's a hypothetical question isn't it? Let me say this, that we are very concerned with the developments in Bougainville. My Ministers who will be up there will have the opportunity of getting the latest rundown from my friend the Prime Minister, Rabbie Namaliu, and they will be coming back to report to me on those discussions they have up there. We will make our judgements about what ought to happen as far as Australia is concerned. But Australia is not going to be - I can assure you - involved in a military sense with personnel up there.

JOURNALIST: Is Badgery's Creek going ahead as an international airport?

PM: Well the decisions have been made about the international airport needs of Australia in general and NSW in particular. You know that we've made the decision in regard to the third runway. The inquiries are going on there. We said at the time that there would be a development at Badgery's Creek subsequently. That remains the case.

JOURNALIST: Do you think many pilots reside in Liverpool Mr Hawke?

PM: It doesn't look like it. The people of Liverpool ... clear and precise judgement about what they thought of their performance. I won't use the language that the local residents used to me about them but it was very uncomplimentary.

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