



## PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW ON COMMENTS BY RALPH WILLIS - PETER THOMPSON, THE WORLD TODAY 5 JUNE 1989

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PM: I'm not going to go any further. As the Minister indicated there are certain processes of investigation going on within the Party and of course he has provided a significant input to those processes. I think that's all that needs to be said at this stage.

THOMPSON: If there is to be a change of policy first of all the ALP Airlines Funding Committee must recommend that. What Mr Willis said does put them under great pressure.

PM: I don't know whether it puts them under great pressure. He made a clearly articulated case before so your question assumes that this was the first time they'd heard this from Mr Willis. The opposite is true, he's appeared before them and put the case.

THOMPSON: Of course if there's to be a change of ALP policy that would require a special national conference. Do you favour that sort of thing?

PM: As he said, that's required and we understand that.

THOMPSON: Are you happy about that idea?

PM: It's not a question of being happy, that's why the thing has been done. We considered it at the previous conference, it was recognised that this was an issue in which there are lots of considerations and emotions involved. I understand all those and I'm one, as I think it's been well established, that likes to see processes established which enable people to express their points of view, have the matter fully on the table. So in a sense there's nothing new in what the Minister said, it's just that there was an articulate public expression of the issue. We hear this pathetic posturing of the Opposition which talks about reform in the Government business enterprise section and talks about privatisation. You've got to remember that for 31 years of the 34 before we came to office they were in power they never did anything in terms of micro-economic reform or to make the public enterprises more efficient. Now they're just tub thumping and making noises which are empty noises. We've gone about the business of trying to make the public sector more efficient and we're succeeding.

THOMPSON: Just a very brief final one on that machinery of bringing in a change of policy, would you hold an ALP national conference before the next election?

PM: There's no commitment necessarily to holding one before the next election. I'm not going to be rushing into some judgement about these things, I'm quite happy with the way the processes are going. You must get your perspectives right in politics and remember that all that's happened is that the Minister has said on a television program precisely what he said to the Committee some time ago. That's the reality, the fact that something said on a television program which has already been said to the Committee shouldn't be regarded as something remarkable.

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