



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS CONFERENCE, GEORGE GEAR'S ELECTORATE OFFICE, PERTH - 14 JULY 1989

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JOURNALIST: Is your job made more difficult at the moment with a senior Minister saying that the Labor Party hasn't got more than a 50/50 chance of getting back in?

PM: No, not at all. Next question.

JOURNALIST: (inaudible)

PM: I've expressed it. Haven't you caught up with today's news. ... I have expressed my disagreement, yes. We're going to win. And if you can get onto even money it's the best even money bet in Australia.

JOURNALIST: Mr Button also says that -

PM: Senator Button.

JOURNALIST: - that you have a big ego. Do you have a big ego?

PM: He didn't say that at all. Show me the transcript. I've read the transcript, have you?

JOURNALIST: He says ... you've got a big ego.

PM: Get me the transcript. C'mon, show the lady. Get me the transcript. Now, don't manufacture things. Do you want to see it? Just have a look at it. There you are. Next question.

JOURNALIST: ... feeling in the Party that something should be done about interest rates early. Obviously that was not part of your agenda. Do you think that there's a need to change the plan?

PM: I've made it quite clear that it's open for people to make their suggestions. That's the sort of democratic country we have, the democratic party we've got. Now we'll be starting on Monday in the detailed processes of Budget formulation. We'll make the decisions as we have over the last six years in the best interests of this country. Policies which have produced one and a half million new jobs, which have brought inflation down from eleven per cent to seven per cent, which have produced

universal medical coverage for Australians, which have seen levels of social welfare payments, targetted welfare payments the like of which have never been seen before. We've created a more efficient and more just society. We'll continue to make the decisions that will keep that going.

JOURNALIST: Have your backbenchers lost their nerve?

PM: It may be said that some of them are getting a little nervous. Look at this bloke (George Gear), he hasn't, never has.

JOURNALIST: In the Business Review Weekly Mr Keating said that he has not been getting the recognition he deserves and that if he was in another country he might get a medal or some sort for what he's done for the economy. Do you think that's a very good thing to say ...?

PM: I think he might have had his tongue in his cheek when he said it.

JOURNALIST: On Bastille Day do you have a message for the French?

PM: Yes. The French are our good friends now and we have had recently the opportunity of talking together. I've met with President Mitterand, Prime Minister Rocard, and Foreign Minister Dumas and we are on the same wavelength. I say to them now on Bastille Day, congratulations on what they have given to the world. ... our history of Australia as the country in the period of European settlement is almost identical in time with the period of the French Revolution. Much of the concepts that were developed in that period, concepts of equality, liberty, fraternity, are principles which have been important in the development of Australia as a great democracy. They were very, very generous the French in 1988 in participating in the Australian Bicentennary. Very, very generous indeed. We have made some contributions to their year. I wish them well.

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