

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEWS WITH PAUL LYNEHAM, 7.30 REPORT, 20 JULY 1989

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LYNEHAM: Mr Hawke, thanks for joining us.

HAWKE: Thanks Paul.

LYNEHAM: How much of today was about saving the environment and how much of it was about winning green votes to save the Government?

PM: All of it was about saving the environment. I believe that when the election has come, that the people of Australia - as far as they take the environment into account - will give us the marks, not just because of today, but we have been an environmentally conscious and active government since day one. We saved the Franklin. If the people represented by Senator Puplick had been in and had their way, the Franklin would be dammed. Every nomination that we've made for the World Heritage List was opposed by the Puplick crowd, all of them. They have been anti-government, anti-environment, on every issue. So we will be judged not as a government which made a statement today on 20 July, but as a government which has been judged by the international body advising the World Heritage Commission - that's the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and natural resources. They have said that no government, no government in the world has done more to advance environmental issues under the World Heritage Convention than the Australian Government.

LYNEHAM: Well Rick Farley in Adelaide. It's all very well for the farmers to be getting involved now when they've got a few dollars in their pockets, prices are good. What happens though if bad times return to the bush?

FARLEY: Well farmers I think, are committed to a land ethic. I think that's rapidly developing throughout Australia because even before today's statement, hundreds of Landcare and voluntary groups have been formed from the Kimberleys right down to Tasmania.

LYNEHAM: But they bashed the country around a bit in past generations, haven't they?

FARLEY: Sure. If we'd known then what we know now I'm sure things would've been done differently. That's not only for agriculture, it applies to a whole range of different industries. I think what we've got to do now is look to the future, not into the past.

LYNEHAM: And now they see it very much in their own self interest to look after that land better, do they?

FARLEY: Very, very clearly because the economic imperative is increasingly apparent. We're losing productivity as a result of land degradation and I think one of the great things about the Prime Minister's statement today is that there is a long term commitment so that farmers now can undertake long term planning.

LYNEHAM: Phillip Toyne, tell us about this extraordinary alliance between the farmers and the greenies. I mean, many farmers think of the greenies as greenless, many greenies think of farmers as rednecks don't they? I mean, are they really comfortable in bed together?

TOYNE: Well as a form of necessity. I think we both realise as groups that if we've got a problem that's so widespread, so chronic, that's going to be so costly to repair, then we've both got a very strong interest in seeing that it happens. It seemed to me and it seemed to Rick Farley that the best way to go was to combine forces and to make sure that it did happen.

LYNEHAM: Which meant this sort of consensus that is politically irresistible to a man like Bob Hawke?

TOYNE: Absolutely. I think that the Prime Minister was extremely sensible, extremely visionary in accepting such an arrangement and his statement today will be well remembered for the land management package that he announced today. I mean, it was an exciting package to the extent that it was the first time, I think, that a Federal Government has really attempted to grapple effectively with the issues of economic development and environmental sustainability. I'm excited by that. We had our criticisms of the package but by and large I see it as a very positive step.

LYNEHAM: Well, Mr Hawke, it's a good idea to see the bureaucracy using recycled paper. What about your own household though at the Lodge. Are you changing things there at all?

PM: We are looking at what we can do as individuals, not only in regard to paper but, for instance, in the area of the pressure packs and so on. We're getting rid of those and they will be banned by legislation completely, I hope, within five years. But yes, we're going to look at what we can do. It's not going to be just words, it's action as far as we're concerned.

LYNEHAM: .... perhaps recycled paper in the Prime Ministerial loo?

PM: Well I'd like to see that, yes.

LYNEHAM: The compost heap, is there one at the Lodge?

PM: Yes there is.

LYNEHAM: Is there a brick in the cistern?

PM: .... brick in the cistern?

LYNEHAM: Well it's supposed to save water isn't it?

PM: Is that right? Well, I'll have to talk to the people in charge there and see about that.

LYNEHAM: Prime Minister, given that the States have control of the coastal zone, is there very much the Commonwealth can do?

PM: There are various things we can and will do. Firstly we've, as you know, referred to the Resource Assessment Commission the whole question of the coastal zone and we'll seek to involve all the States in the terms of reference so that all levels of government will be involved -

LYNEHAM: It's like a big stocktaking exercise is it?

PM: Well, yes but it's an important thing to do. Secondly, we've established a national working group on coastal management which again will involve all groups - the environmental groups, tourist industry and governments. We want to get this thing settled and work through an acceptable way, via the process of consensus. But let me say this, that the Commonwealth does have powers in regard to the corporations and it does have a corporation power and I'm not holding that up as a threat. But if the processes of consensus were not to work and you were to get something which was aggressively unacceptable, then the corporation power and the foreign investment power would be available as a last resort. But obviously I think the Australian people, Paul, overwhelmingly would want the State Governments to accept their responsibilities in these matters, to follow the lead that we as a Commonwealth Government are giving.

LYNEHAM: Prime Minister, on another Tasmanian issue - the CSIRO report today on pulp mill standards. Bill Paisley of North Broken Hill says it vindicates the Wesley Vale proposal and he wants to see that back on track within 12 months or so.

PM: I don't think there'll be a mill at Wesley Vale. Let me remind you what CSIRO told us, and it was the basis upon which we made the decision we did. They said that the proposal there which would involve the pumping into the ocean each day of 13 tonnes of organochlorides was not acceptable. That's a view which I share. On the question of pulp mills our position is - and I think with respect to our friends in the green movement, they have never, as I understand it, said, 'no pulp mills'. But what they have said, I think responsibly is, 'only pulp mills if you have acceptable environmental standards'. What we are going to do is to ensure that there are created national guidelines

in regard to these matters which will ensure that the standards are acceptable. It may be that in Tasmania you could have a pulp mill but not on the Wesley Vale site pumping that 13 tonnes a day into the ocean. You may at another environmentally acceptable site, and with environmentally acceptable standards of operation, you may be able to do it.

LYNEHAM: Let's go to Sydney now and the Opposition spokesman on the environment, Senator Chris Puplick. Senator, should there be a pulp mill at Wesley Vale?

PUPLICK: I don't think that's the important environmental issue Paul. I think that that's just a side track on this particular issue.

LYNEHAM: (inaudible)

PUPLICK: ... If you want to talk about the CSIRO you can talk about why it is with all of this research that CSIRO has now got to do as a result of this package, the Hawke Government has cut CSIRO funding by 32% over five years. If there's going to be all this money for foreign aid to deal with those questions, why in fact it's cut foreign aid from 0.5 down to 0.3% of GDP. Why don't you get on to the substantive issues about soil and water quality matters which really are important in this debate.

LYNEHAM: Alright, if you don't want to talk about Wesley Vale, let's talk about today's statement. What's the Opposition's reaction to it?

PUPLICK: As far as the Government's decision to build on the soil conservation program introduced by the previous coalition government, and the national tree program introduced by the previous coalition government, we welcome those initiatives. But let me say in terms of one of the water quality management problems that the first act undertaken by the Hawke Government in May 1983 was to cut out the waters program introduced by the Fraser Government which within the five years from there on would've spent \$640 million on improving water quality and water management in Australia. Now that was the first thing that the Hawke Government cut out when it came to office. ... cutting back all of the areas which are important and just relying on more studies, another one on coastal management when in fact we've already got a report down which tells us what needs to be done there, no targets about Greenhouse gas emission, no ban on ozone depleting substances and this nonsense about World Heritage listing when you bear in mind that in fact it was our previous government that entered the first five places on the World Heritage list.

LYNEHAM: Senator, very briefly, what did you think of Sir Ninian Stephen's appointment?

PUBLICK: I welcomed Sir Ninian's appointment. He is a most distinguished and eminent Australian. I'm sure he will do a brilliant job for Australia. We look forward to working with him in government.

LYNEHAM: Thanks very much. Mr Hawke, if you have to rely on discussion with the States, without using the external affairs powers or without the extra powers you would have from the referendum, in the end what can you do except write them cheques?

PM: Let me point out Paul that it's not a question of just talking with the States. We have overridden the States. We overrode the States in respect of the Franklin River. I remind you. Puplick's people condemned my Government for saving the Franklin. If they'd been in power the Franklin would be dammed. Now, we overrode them. We overrode the Queensland Government in regard to the Daintree Forest. I much prefer - because it's my nature, you know that - I much prefer concensus -

LYNEHAM: ... like that referendum. If you thought you could pull it off, wouldn't you?

PM: Absolutely. There'd be no question about that. If in fact the Australian people could come to an understanding that the sorts of issues with which we are dealing are ones which in the end, many of them are global in nature and therefore require a national involvement and other issues just take no notice of State boundaries. There is a need for that sort of power. The responsibility is upon these people, our political opponents who have opposed us on every issue where we've saved the environment. If they would join us in helping to create a climate of opinion and support a referendum we would have one.

LYNEHAM: Let's go back to Adelaide now. Lachlan MacIntosh, the Mining Industry Council. If the farmers can get together with the greenies, why can't the miners?

MacIntosh: There's no reason why they can't. There's been plenty of opportunities in the past and there has been discussions in the past. But I think the issue is really one of co-operation with all parties, not just, if you like, greenies and industrialists. I think the Prime Minister today has actually talked about some new mechanisms, new consultative mechanisms which he talked about before. We would like to see those happen. The sooner they happen then everybody will get round and talk about the real issues. That's the important one and I think the other important thing today is the global nature of the problem. There is a lot industry can do and will do in improving environmental management and a lot of technologies that can be exchanged between the different groups - between the farming groups and the industry groups.

LYNEHAM: Are you worried that the coastal zone study of resources might put some of the sand miners in jeopardy?

MACINTOSH: I don't think so. I think they would welcome the opportunity to put their case openly and honestly to the RAC because that's an appropriate body for that to be done. I was there yesterday at Stradbroke Island. There is an enormous amount of restoration technology available which could be useful in other parts of the coast.

LYNEHAM: And your reaction to the fact that the Prime Minister did not set firm limits on Greenhouse gas emissions? You'd be pleased about that wouldn't you?

MACINTOSH: He might not have set clear targets but he's actually talked about the problem. I think that's important because it's no good saying in Australia that we take a level that's important perhaps in Europe. It's important to look in more detail at can we use our coal better here in Australia -

LYNEHAM: Not a global problem?

MACINTOSH: It is a global problem but the CO<sup>2</sup> issue is not necessarily the only issue. Setting a target to reduce here will mean no new power stations, no new jobs and perhaps no new processing plants. That's not what we want to do here. We are a developing country, not a developed country.

LYNEHAM: So you want to see more downstream processing, don't you?

MACINTOSH: I think that's what everyone in Australia does. Then we can afford to pay for the large amounts of money we need to redress the past problems in the environment.

LYNEHAM: If we process here they won't be processed somewhere else.

MACINTOSH: People need the minerals in the world. We all need them. You need them for your television screen tonight. People need those minerals, not only here but in the developing world generally. It's the important technology we can develop here in Australia if we do more processing. If we don't do it someone else will do it.

LYNEHAM: Thanks very much for your time. Mr Hawke, any final comments?

PM: Just on this last issue. Let me say it is right that there can be discussions between our friends in the mining industry and our friends in the environmental movement and ourselves. Don't let's just blacken the mining industry overall. I think there is now in the mining industry, compared with earlier days, a greater sense of understanding of their responsibility. On this final issue that you've

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talked about, about the levels. We accept our responsibility to play our part within the international context to work for a reduction of emission of gases. What Lachlan is talking about is that we are more efficient users of energy than most other countries. In terms of an overall global level, enterprise in Australia relatively is more likely to have a lower level of emission than in other places. So what we've got to do is to look at what we can do there and what we can do in other areas ... It's not only CO<sup>2</sup>, there's methane, and there's a lot we can do in that area. ... our responsibility.

LYNEHAM: Time's got away from us. Thanks to all our guests for joining us tonight. That's it. See you tomorrow night.

PM: Thank you Paul.

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