



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH PAUL BONGIORNO, RAAF BASE, FAIRBAIRN, 26 JULY 1989

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JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, what is the importance of today's multicultural agenda?

PM: Well the importance for all Australians is that it will do two things. It's about social justice. That is ensuring that all Australians, irrespective of their background, they shall have equal access to the resources of government and equal opportunity to develop themselves within Australia. But also it's important for all Australians - whether they are of recent or relatively recent arrival or not - in that it has a fundamental economic theme. We want to ensure that we are able as a community to tap into the resources of all Australians. For instance, we have suffered as a nation very considerable loss over the years because of inadequate recognition of skills, professional and trade skills, of people who have come here. The national agenda will be addressing specific proposals to ensure that we better tap into those provisions.

JOURNALIST: What would you say to cynics who are suggesting that it's another vote-grabbing exercise?

PM: Absolute bloody nonsense. I started this two years ago, even before the last election. I was getting people together to say that I wanted a national multicultural agenda. I established, as I say, two years ago the processes to produce this outcome in saying that I wanted the agenda by the middle of 1989. So the processes were started even before the last election. Cynicism gets a bit boring you know.

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