



## PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF DOORSTOP, CHANNEL NINE STUDIOS, MELBOURNE  
20 AUGUST 1989

E & OE - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: A comment on Ian Sinclair's claim that unless the Coalition gets its policy and philosophical act together it has little hope of winning the next election.

PM: He's right. You can't <sup>always</sup> rely on Ian Sinclair getting it straight and right but he's 100% right in saying that the Coalition is not ready for Government, don't deserve government. It's a pretty damning indictment coming from the person who was their number two person until very recently. He's absolutely right. Why? They have no policies and in the area of policy consideration there are absolutely fundamental divisions within the Liberal Party, within the National Party and between elements of the Liberal Party and the National Party. They have no policies. They have no leaders that are trusted by themselves. The interesting thing about Mr Peacock and the Liberals, none of them have any confidence in him as a man of substance. They thought Howard had some substance, they thought Peacock had none but he was going to be a better salesman. So they've got no confidence in him in terms of policy. And of course with Mr Blunt, the Leader of the National Party, they describe him, they do, as a billy goat. So no policies, divisions and no confidence in their leaders. So when you put all that together Sinclair's right.

JOURNALIST: Do you also agree with his comment that the recent leadership changes have only gone to confuse the electorate?

PM: Well, I don't know that the electorate is confused. I think the opposite is true. I think the electorate is far from confused. They say, well look at this mob. The simple rule. They can't govern themselves, they can't govern the country. It's a good rule of politics. In the Labor Party we were to a large extent rightly condemned on that fundamental principle of the Australian electorate. They say to the parties of Australia if you can't govern yourselves you're not going to govern us.

JOURNALIST: Is it a good move as far as the ALP is concerned?

PM: Well, we show that we can govern ourselves. We are a united, tough, competent, compassionate team. That shows out in all that we do and just as we can govern ourselves so we can govern the country. On the other side they are a collection of unprincipled opportunists. Mr Sinclair is simply saying, he's issued the warning straight and clear

*it's their term, not mine*

to billy goat Blunt, <sup>^</sup> he say's you're fair game boy, you butted me out billy goat and I'm about to butt you right out at the earliest opportunity. Good luck to them as they play their games. They expend all their energies on hating and fighting one another. We'll get on with governing the country.

JOURNALIST: Mr Sinclair has vowed to challenge for the leadership. Do you think he will butt his way back in again?

PM: I would think if I were Mr Blunt I would have the very very heaviest padding around my backside and my back because he'll get butted and stabbed. There's no doubt about that. He needs very heavy protective armour because let's face it, Ian Sinclair is no mean fighter. He's declared war on Mr Blunt. So put your defences up billy goat.

ends