



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF DOORSTOP, ESSENDON FOOTBALL OVAL, 10 SEPTEMBER 1989

E & O E - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: (inaudible)

PM: Well, by this stage, having seen all the untruths that the Pilots' Federation has told, I don't think that anyone will believe them.

JOURNALIST: Maurice Alexander said yesterday that he's expecting the Industrial Relations Commission to stand down the flight attendants following their decision to -

PM: Well, the flight attendants have made their decision. They must expect that other parties in the dispute will respond to the decision they've taken, a highly irresponsible decision, I might say.

JOURNALIST: Ansett also says that the private pilots have been given a fast-track through the accreditation, how far are you prepared to go to sacrifice safety just to get the planes back in the air?

PM: I don't sacrifice safety at all. I mean, with respect, that's a quite stupid question. I don't have anything to do with determination about safety. We have the totally independent arms-length body which has responsibility to deal with those issues and they will make the decisions about the safety standards, as they have always and they're not going to put at risk the safety of Australian passengers.

JOURNALIST: There's been no pressure from the Government to hurry the process up?

PM: We don't Look, hurrying of the procedures are to do with getting the people physically here, getting them here, so that through immigration there is no problems about getting them here. That's a totally distinct issue from what you talk about - safety.

JOURNALIST: At this stage, without the flight attendants it

appears the aircraft may stay on the ground. How does that leave your -

PM: Well, we've simply said that we expect that planes of the airlines will be flying this week. I hope that they'll be flying by the middle of the week. I expect them to and I hope that everyone will do everything they possibly can to achieve that objective.

JOURNALIST: How can they fly without flight attendants?

PM: Well, do you think we wouldn't have thought of that? I mean, I don't think it's sensible for you to be expecting that I'm going to be explaining to you, in the light of a decision taken by flight attendants to try and get into bed with the pilots, that we will be exposing what will be done to ensure that these planes are able to fly.

JOURNALIST: Can you stake your reputation on that -

PM: Look, don't be silly. This is a pretty serious sort of dispute. Who's staking reputations on anything? If you want, as the media, to do that sort of thing, that's your business. What I'm about is doing all that I can to get this issue resolved.

JOURNALIST: (inaudible)

PM: Well, you can make the judgements, you can make the judgements about reputations at the end of this dispute. What I have been doing consistently, on behalf of the Government, is to try and cooperate, through my Ministers with the airlines and with the rest of the trade union movement, to try and ensure one simple thing - that the Australian economy is not going to be wrecked. You don't seem to be able to get the right perspective about this, you don't understand that what is at issue is not simply a claim by pilots. What is at issue is the whole wages system of this country, the whole strength of our Australian economy and it's at issue, in terms of whether an already highly privileged group of pilots are going to be able, by making a claim outside the system, by holding a gun at the head of the airlines, whether they are going to be able to wreck the Australian economy. To stop that happening I will do everything I can to ensure that the Australian economy is protected. You can flounce around and make what judgements you want to make about reputations. You go on doing that and I will do everything I can to protect the Australian economy.

JOURNALIST: So planes will definitely be flying despite yesterday's decision by the flight attendants?

PM: I believe planes will be flying this week. Yes.

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