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PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF DOORSTOP, SYDNEY CONVENTION CENTRE, DARLING HARBOUR, 17 SEPTEMBER 1989

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JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, the cannon fire interrupted your speech a little bit there, but what do you think will attract most Australians to this campaign?

PM: I think the obviously increasing concern of Australians with environmental issues generally and, at times, I think Australians wonder 'well, what is there that we can do about protecting our environment'. This program offers each individual Australian a direct opportunity of being part of helping to protect the environment. I think that's what they'll find attractive.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, have you had any response from the pilots from your letter to them last week?

PM: No, I haven't had any response yet, but of course I've written to them. I noticed in one of the programs this morning that the Federation is preparing a reply. Well, that's a bit disappointing. My letter was to individual pilots, I would have hoped that individual pilots, I thought they would regard themselves as individuals, enterprising, and that each one of them would be able to prepare their own reply. I would hope that's what would happen.

JOURNALIST: they want an independent negotiator -

PM: Yes, they want an independent negotiator. That's been their position from the beginning. They want to be different from everyone else, everyone else. Everyone else in Australia who's employed in the workforce are operating within a system which has protected Australia, which has created one and a half million new jobs, which has brought the wage restraint - which is allowing the great surge of investment and employment that's taken place. That's how it's happened - by everyone exercising restraint. Now they say 'no, that's not good enough for us, give us someone else. Give us an independent negotiator, an independent arbitrator'. There's been no change from the beginning. What has to happen is that the Pilots' Federation must understand that they will not be treated differently from the rest of the workforce.

JOURNALIST: What's your reaction to George Campbell's comments, Mr Hawke?

PM: I've got no comment on George Campbell.

JOURNALIST: Are you concerned by -

PM: I've said I've got no comment on George Campbell.

JOURNALIST: Your comments about an independent negotiator have followed through to the nomination by the pilots of Sir Laurence Street as a mediator -

PM: Well yes, I mean, it's quite clear from what I've said, is that they have said from the beginning, when they started in February. You remember in February they drew up what they called their battle plan - their words. A battle plan in which they said 'we are going to be faced with a situation where we'll be fighting the airlines, the Government, the trade union movement and everyone'. That's what they said in February of this year. They drew up their battle plan to isolate themselves from everyone else. Now, when it's clear that we, representing the community, are not going to allow them to be different from everyone else, we're not trying to impose something special upon them. We're saying you can't draw up your battle plan in February to destroy your industry, destroy this country and then, at the end of it, say 'oh no, please give us an independent negotiator'. It is not on. The pilots must simply do what everyone else does, accept the guidelines. That's what's happening now. Under the individual contracts that are being signed by pilots that are joining up, they are getting their increases, they are getting changes in their conditions, but it is being done in accordance with the principles that apply to everyone else.

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