



PRIME MINISTER

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E & OE - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: What have you decided regarding the international Antarctic Centre. Is the Commonwealth going to re-look at the Centre?

PM: What we agree our priority should be is concentrating on trying to ensure that Tasmania, Hobart in particular, is given as much work as it can be given in terms of this being a base for vessels going to the Antarctic. That has a number of ramifications, including a consideration of the rules that govern the access to Australian ports of foreign research vessels and I have instructed my Foreign Minister to review those guidelines in a way which will try and ensure that as much opportunity be given for access to Hobart. That's the emphasis that we want to give at this stage and if we can build up Hobart as a centre, as a port for the servicing of activity in the Antarctic, then down the line following that it may be appropriate to look at the question of a Centre.

JOURNALIST: So you still leave the question open of whether or not the Centre will be built?

PM: Yes, but it's, to be honest, I don't in other words want to have five bob each way and say yes its there just around the corner, but saying its not the thing on which we concentrate now, it makes more sense to give the priority that I have suggested. But then it may well be that if we're successful, as I trust and hope we will be, in building Hobart up in this other way, then in that context we could perhaps more realistically look at the sort of centre that's been talked about.

JOURNALIST: Will the Federal Government support Hobart's bid for the Russian fishing fleet?

PM: I've made it quite clear that Hobart is to be a port for availability of the fleet.

JOURNALIST: Will that worry the other States?

PM: Well, as to where the vessels would go in the end that would be a matter for the Soviets to decide what's most appropriate in terms of their activities but from what I understand it would be regarded as a priority port. But let me say where we are on it. We have really, as far as the fisheries part of the negotiations, got a draft agreement there but you will understand that in terms of Australia's interests we identified the negotiations in regard to fisheries with negotiations in regard to a commodity agreement and we've got to finalise that part of the total agreement. I understand from my officials that that's going to be done in the very near future. So we're approaching the point where the actual agreements with the Soviets should be finalised before very long. Then once that's done, I'm quite confident that Hobart will before long be a significant beneficiary.

JOURNALIST: What was the outcome of your meeting on the tourism reconstruction funding?

PM: It was a very very useful meeting, I found it any rate, and I want to say at the outset that I congratulate the Premier and the Government of Tasmania in the way in which they have co-ordinated with the people in the industry across a broad spectrum. It was a very constructive meeting. There was understanding of the reasons for the problems. In other words, we as the Federal Government, at all points, have sought to have the pilots operating within the system so that they would have negotiated their claims within the system. They wouldn't do that and therefore we couldn't have allowed them to have their 30% ... because that would have created an enduring and disastrous problem for the Australian economy as a whole and for Tasmania in particular. On that basis I have indicated that Tasmania will be a significant beneficiary of the substantial package of assistance to the tourism industry. Let me make it clear what the elements of it are. It's a \$30 million package made up in this way. There will be \$18.5 million for an intensive international advertising campaign which will be for the whole of Australia and advising potential tourists around the world of the attractions of Australia in general and of course, Tasmania will be very much included in that very, very substantial international advertising. Secondly, of the \$11.5 million remainder of the package, \$5 million of that will be for an Australia-wide sort of generic advertising campaign urging Australians to take their holidays in Australia, to tour Australia and Tasmania will obviously be in part a beneficiary of that. Of the \$6.5 million of the rest of the package, there were arguments put to me that it was really the north of Australia that needed to be dealt with because their high point of the tourist

(PM cont) season had coincided with the worst part of the problems in the airline industry and that that wasn't true of Tasmania. I said well I don't accept that and I insisted and so that's what's happening. That \$6.5 million will be divided equally between the Northern Territory, North Queensland and Tasmania. So Tasmania will get \$2.2 million for its specific advertising. So Tasmania is going to benefit in those three ways, international advertising, the general Australian advertising, but \$2.2 million for itself. I also pointed out to the meeting that I had raised the issue of tax payments with the Taxation Commissioner and I've informed the meeting that any operators or people who can show that they have been directly and adversely affected by the problems in the airline industry in a way which have created difficulties for them in meeting their tax payments, that those considerations will be taken into account sympathetically by the Tax Commissioner?

JOURNALIST: Ian Macphee said today that he intended to ask the National Crime Authority to re-open inquiries into currency dealings by Sir Peter Abeles. Would you have any comment on that?

PM: I think in these areas that Mr Macphee sort of gave some indication of what he's worth by his performance in the Lakeside Hotel the other night. That's about how much importance you can attach to him. These issues are old hat and have been looked at by the last Head of the National Crime Authority, Mr Justice Stewart, and been found to be totally lacking in substance.

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