



## PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS CONFERENCE, SMITH FAMILY-TRADESMEN'S UNION CLUB, WODEN, 6 DECEMBER 1989

E & O E - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, what do you think of the ACT Government?

PM: It's not as good as the last one.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, ... another election.

PM: Look I'm not intervening in those affairs. They've got to follow their own processes, make up their own minds.

JOURNALIST: Isn't the whole system a farce though, given that this could happen?

PM: Well I don't think you'd call the whole system a farce. What you'd have to ask about some of the participants, for instance, those who run on the basis of No Self Government and then grab the seats of office. You know, there are some questions about them I suppose.

JOURNALIST: inaudible

PM: Let me say as far as the question of the ACT and what's going on there, it's not a matter that I'm giving any of my thinking to. There are others who will be fully involved in that. I'm not really thinking very much about it so you won't get much from me of interest.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, the NSW Government has had a fairly lukewarm reception to the road plan, saying putting conditions on the road funding is like pork barrelling. What do you think of that?

PM: This isolated Government, the only non-Labor Government now amongst the Australian States, I don't regard as very representative. Mr Greiner seems to find it impossible not to play politics on issues of fundamental importance. I believe that the responses from the States generally will be as it should be. That is positive and constructive.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, is the latest intelligence from Manila causing any concern about the safety of the Ambassador or any of the Australians caught there?

PM: I'm being kept constantly informed. As soon as I go back this morning I'll get another update of the position. We are monitoring it very, very closely and obviously you must have some concern.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, Clyde Holding commented this morning that it's just a matter of bums on seats, this new alliance and that in fact they might hang together purely based on self interest. Would you support that view?

PM: Well I've really nothing to add to what I've said before on this. I've exhausted my observations on the matter of the ACT.

JOURNALIST: That \$7M, is that still going ahead as promised or is that just pork barrelling under the previous Labor Government.

PM: No, if there's a commitment been made to a government it will go ahead.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, how did last night's strategy meeting of Cabinet go?

PM: Very, very well. If I could describe it briefly I would say it was one of constructive but not complacent optimism and commitment.

JOURNALIST: Have the Ministers come up with lots of suggestions?

PM: I mean, look you don't want to get your mind set in terms of some of your colleagues in the media's misunderstanding of things who say, 'Hawke begging for new ideas'. This is just a process which I've gone through in all lead-ups to elections that I've been associated with. It just makes sense to have a review with your Ministers of the way issues have been developing within their portfolios, how they see them being developed and presented at the next election, there's nothing unusual about that. That's what we did, as I say, in a very constructive way.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, there's been suggestions that they may not be able to get the tourists out of the business district in Manila at once, it might be a three or four stage withdrawal and that some people may be held hostage.

JOURNALIST: Well of course we would be terribly concerned if it were to develop in that way. All I can say is that we will (a) be constantly - and I mean constantly - monitoring the situation. Reports are coming in with regular consistency and that we will, as a Government, take whatever steps are necessary in terms of

trying to ensure the safety of those for whom we have a responsibility.

JOURNALIST: Do you have any idea of how many tourists, Australian tourists, are caught up in it apart from the Embassy officials?

PM: No, I don't at this stage but I have an arrangement for another full briefing this morning and I'll be in a better position to answer that question then.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, if NSW refuses to go along with your road safety package does that mean there'd be more money available for the States that do go along with it?

PM: I don't believe that in the end that NSW will adopt that position. I mean they have demonstrated a capacity for very silly attitudes in the past but then they, under the light of reasoning, tend to change. I mean that happened in the case of what they were doing about charging for hospital beds, for instance. I think that they will see that they would be in very bad odour if on an issue like this where the offer of the Commonwealth is direct and related to a matter of fundamental public concern and it's calculated to try and improve the terrible carnage on our roads, that's not an area where you should be playing politics. I think that they will become more sensible on it.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, there's been ... that the two labour officials for that damning report in NSW be sacked. Would you support those calls?

PM: Read the transcript of yesterday's press conference will you.

ends