



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH NEVILLE OLIVER, ABC RADIO,
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OLIVER: ... just joined us in our Commonwealth Games studio here in Auckland, the Prime Minister of Australia, Bob Hawke. Welcome Prime Minister.

PM: Thanks Neville. Can I just say at the outset, congratulations for your coverage. I mean it's been fantastic. So very well received in Australia I can tell you.

OLIVER: Thank you very much. How has the Australian performance been received in Australia?

PM: Everyone's very very proud. You know we started off before the Games started and there was a bit of adverse publicity about, y'know, a little bit of behaviour. A lot of headlines about that. But I was very confident once the business end of the proceedings started that our people would get down to it. And they have. Australians are tremendously proud of them.

OLIVER: What's been your special moment of the Games?

PM: Special moment? Well I suppose one of our competitors that I felt very very pleased for was Clarkey. I mean he really has been, over a long period of time, a battler. He's always been on the edge of, y'know, a medal. I was very pleased for him in the 400 metres. It was -

OLIVER: And of course then there's young Hayley Lewis. I mean Australia has always had an expectation of having good swimmers.

PM: Yes, well tremendous performance. And I must say one of the things that was a highlight for me at the Australian end was I was in Brisbane last week, I was out in Caboolture, and someone said to me 'you know young van Wirdum's dad might be around out here'. And I said oh is that right. I got out there to Caboolture and there was this little bloke, old pair of shorts, old shirt, and you've never seen anyone so proud as he was. He was a lovely bloke. He was just bursting with pride about Karen's performance. He said 'I'm a single parent, brought her up myself'. That was very touching. I

suppose if I had to have sort of one moment in terms of what it meant for a family I just saw that very proud dad, Bob van Wirdum. He'd brought this kid up himself.

OLIVER: Fantastic.

PM: Great.

OLIVER: That's what it's all about really isn't it.

PM: Isn't it. Yes.

OLIVER: The AIS. I've been taking particular notice of their performances. I can remember when it was set up after the disaster of '76. The AIS as an initiative - what are your views on it now?

PM: I think it's marvellous. I mean there's been a lot of sort of navel-gazing about it by a lot of people. As you know - you're in the media - a lot of the media tends to want to look just at the down side of things and not be terribly constructive and positive. But what we're seeing here with that national anthem of ours being played 43 times in these Games is the reflection of that good investment in the Australian Institute of Sport. And it's not only at the level of athletics. But you know we've got the cricket aspect of it with the cricket academy in Adelaide. In that match that I had yesterday, the Prime Minister's XI against Pakistan, there was about five or six of my side, young blokes, coming through the academy. You can see it now, the standard of Australian cricket. That pool of talent we've got there is better than anything we've had before I think.

OLIVER: What about the relevance of the Commonwealth Games? Edinburgh was an absolute disaster in terms of the black African boycott. If the black Africans turn up, it is a meaningful event, is it not?

PM: Very meaningful. I mean you look at the sort of standards that are being achieved here. You've got to remember the Commonwealth covers such a representative of the nations of the world. A third of the population, approximately a third of the population I think. It ranges from the second largest in India, 800 million people, down to the tiniest. All colours, creeds. It is a very very representative, if you like, body of nations of the world with very special characteristics. I think it's a very worthwhile institution.

OLIVER: Could I ask you Prime Minister if Hazel elbowed you out of the way to present Lisa with a gold medal? Lisa Martin. That happened just a little while ago folks. I was just wondering whether she pulled rank on you.

PM: No she didn't. They'd asked me and it just occurred to someone 'well what about Hazel?'. I never stand in Hazel's road in these things. She does a tremendous job for Australia here and overseas and I thought it was just beaut that she did it.

OLIVER: Are you going to have time with all your other engagements to fit a bit of golf in?

PM: The major event of the Games is on Saturday morning at nine o'clock. A head-on between Australia and New Zealand.

OLIVER: What's the form like?

PM: Well I'm playing him off the stick. They tell me he's spent a lot of time, Geoffrey, over the Christmas/New Year break practising. But I just had a couple of games myself. The head to head contest stands two-one Australian favour at the moment.

OLIVER: Good. With the way we've gone in the Games you've got a bit of tradition to uphold now.

PM: Bloody oath.

OLIVER: Can I just be cheeky enough before we go. We've just heard the news from Australia about the balance of payments. Is that a gold medal performance?

PM: Is that a -

OLIVER: Am I allowed to ask you that?

PM: Is that a sporting question? Oh well, ... broadly defined a sporting question. It was very good. It came in on the low side of expectations. It confirms what we had been hoping to see. Things are slowing down a bit while still having growth. But slowing down to a sustainable level and it validates the action that was taken, ... beginning to take in the area of monetary policy.

OLIVER: So 43 gold medals and I'll award the Government one for that eh.

PM: Thanks mate.

OLIVER: Good to have you in Prime Minister.

PM: And could I say again congratulations to you all. You've done Australia proud.

OLIVER: Thank you very much. It's terrific that you're so accessible to us. Thanks for dropping in.

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