



PRIME MINISTER

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E & O E - PROOF ONLY

PM: It's very appropriate that we should be meeting in this environment which is a clear manifestation of another area of our environmental concern which we've enhanced today by making further funds available for the endangered species program that is going to be developed here in Western Australia. This comes at the end of a week where the Coalition has once again indicated its environmental vandalism credentials. We have the example again of the National Party tail wagging the Coalition dog with the announcement that they would support the establishment of the uranium enrichment industry. Once they saw some reaction to that they back-pedalled a little bit, but not substantially, with Mr Peacock saying that if it didn't happen in the first year it would happen in the second or third year. This is something which has been undertaken without any consideration either of the economics of it and certainly of the environmental implications, and certainly without taking into account the obligations that we have in regard to the safeguarding of the uranium cycle around the world. We don't want to be seeing a proliferation of uranium enrichment industries. So we reject the proposal of the Coalition. And it's also interesting to note that in this week there has emerged the fact that Mr Peacock again, either deliberately or because he simply doesn't know his own policies, misrepresented last Sunday in the debate the situation in regard to the Kakadu National Park. You will recall that in the debate they have made it clear that the policy of the Coalition was to allow mineral exploration in Kakadu. Mr Peacock said no, but of course it's been established since then that what I said was right. That is their position. So the people of Australia on the issue of the environment have, as I said last Sunday, a very very stark choice. I remind the people again that on every major decision that I've taken to protect the environment - the Franklin, to stop logging in Daintree, mining in Kakadu, saving the forests in Tasmania - on every one of those decisions we were opposed by the Liberal and National Parties. And in this campaign they are, as I say, establishing once again their credentials as environmental vandals.

JOURNALIST: Today in the Sydney Morning Herald there appears to be a comprehensive leak on Labor's child care policy to be unveiled next week. Are we seeing here some

sort of Dutch auction between Labor and the Liberals when it comes to child care?

PM: Let me say two things about that. I haven't yet read the report to which you refer Paul and I make no comment on any report. I'll be making an announcement at the appropriate time in regard to child care. The second thing I say is this. We are not in any Dutch auction. I am able to stand before the people of Australia now and very proudly compare and contrast our record on child care with that of our opponents. We have more than doubled, in fact ... just under 150% increase in the number of child care places since we've been in government. And under the program that's going on that will mean by 1992 a trebling under my Government of the number of child care places. So I stand proud on the issue of child care. We see proposals from the Opposition which in an untargeted way are going to give handouts to people who relatively speaking are not in need. But I will detail our new proposals at the appropriate time.

JOURNALIST: But the fact is that the Liberal Party is proposing to treble the spending on child care that you're prepared to commit.

PM: You can easily treble spending on child care or a number of other things but there are two things that you have to take into account when you talk about spending proposals. Firstly, targeting. The Opposition have a very very distorted concept of targeting. If you look at them over the years they've said watch the dole bludgers. They have a very very acute vision when it comes to targeting at the bottom end of the income scale. Knock the dole bludgers type of thing. Very very acute vision when it comes to targeting down there. The same acuteness of vision disappears when they look at the top of the income scale where they say well just give it to anyone, whatever the level of income. So that's the first thing. Second thing, as I've been saying throughout this week, and it seems to be taking hold now in this campaign, you've got to look at the funding of the promises that you make. Now the fact is that as we now come to the end of the second week of the campaign the Liberals have done nothing to answer the legitimate questions of the media and of the people of Australia about this more than \$6 billion funding hole. And they're going to have to do that because they are not believable in the handout. You can see that they will promise with the left hand giving something in child care but they're going to rip it away on the other hand. Look at what they're going to be ripping away. They're going to be ripping away in the area of superannuation and of course if they are going to fund the \$6 billion deficit then where are they going to cut? They're going to have to cut an enormous amount of services to people. Or, if they don't do that, they'll blow the budget. And if they do that then of course interest rates go through the roof

and people have it taken away in that fashion. They have failed lamentably to discharge the responsibilities they have to the people. You can't simply say yes we'll give you something in child care and then leave this uncompleted picture of how people will suffer either by the tremendous cuts they're going to have to make in other services or by the blowing out of the budget deficit.

JOURNALIST: Child care is a big issue in the electorate, but has the Government and the trade union movement been a bit slow to respond to the concerns out there?

PM: You could hardly say we're slow to respond to concerns where over our period of seven years in office we've had just on 150% increase in child care places. It's pretty hard to say you're slow to respond when that's your record and in fact you have funded and in progress the creation of a further 30,000 places which will mean a trebling of places over the period. It's pretty hard to make the accusation of slowness in those circumstances.

JOURNALIST: But over that period of time demand has increased dramatically as well as more women have gone back into the workforce.

PM: Well yes, but we have undertaken a range of approaches, as you know, in regard to also encouraging employers to provide work-related child care places. I don't think anyone can say that in terms of the Australian record of governments and child care that any other government, as I've said before, has come within a bull's roar of the performance of this Government.

JOURNALIST: The ACF is having a ballot this weekend to decide who to give their second preferences to. Does Labor expect to get them?

PM: We deserve to get them Peter. The Government of Australia after the 24th of March will be provided either by my Party, a continuation of the Labor Government, or by the environmental vandalistic coalition of Libs and National Party. If people whose predominant concern is the environment want to have the environment of Australia protected then there is only one responsible decision that can be made. And that is to ensure that their preferences go to Labor.

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