



PRIME MINISTER

INTERVIEW WITH JUDY TIERNEY, ABC RADIO, HOBART, 19 MARCH
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E & O E - PROOF ONLY

JUDY TIERNEY: You've acted angrily to Mr. Peacock's comments on the Multi-Function Polis, do you seriously believe that this could become an election issue in the final week?

PRIME MINISTER: I have reacted, I have with controlled anger Judy. The answer to your question is presumably Mr. Peacock, after having known that this has been in the arena for some two and a half years, has not introduced the matter some six days before an election without himself wanting to make it an election issue. Let me make it quite clear that I have not, and would never accuse Mr. Peacock himself of being racist, but what I do say is that he is being recklessly opportunistic in deliberately misrepresenting what this proposal is about. The proposal is something which has certain principles laid down about it, and one of those fundamental principles is that anything that may develop should not be in any sense an enclave because such a concept is abhorrent to everything for which I and the Government and I believe the people of Australia stand. So those have been commissioned from Government and industry, and we have all our leading business enterprises involved in this, have the clear guiding principle that there is to be no suggestion of an enclave and yet here comes Mr. Peacock six days before an election, and says he's against this because he's against the concept of an enclave. Mr. Peacock was given the opportunity Judy, last September, to be fully briefed personally on everything involved in this, he declined that opportunity to be so briefed. And it is very interesting now that you have the situation today where his colleague in the State of New South Wales has repudiated him, Mr. Greiner has completely repudiated him.

TIERNEY: Yes well Mr. Greiner is in favour of course.

PM: As is any reasonable person in favour of what is happening and what is happening is that a concept is being investigated. No decision has been made but what is being investigated is simple this - is there a way in which Australia can attract to it

PM cont: in a very concentrated form, the leading edge technology not only of Japan but of the United States and of Europe so that there can be united with an increasingly educated and trained Australian workforce the best technology of the rest of the world, and anyone who purports to lead a major political party in this country and who says now just on the eve of an election for obvious opportunistic reasons, that they would cut dead the investigation into the possibility of attracting leading technology to Australia, is being grossly irresponsible.

TIERNEY: All that accepted, I think the interesting thing is that it's become such a big deal simply because there's perhaps nothing else has taken off as an issue in the last few days up to the election?

PM: No I wouldn't put it that way Judy, I wouldn't put it that way at all. If you look for instance at today's Australian newspaper, both the front page article by Paul Kelly, respected political journalist, and the editorial of the Australian, what has seized these people and others I might say, is the enormity, the sheer enormity and reckless adventurism and opportunism of Mr. Peacock, and these people are repudiating it. Not in terms of wanting to take sides with the Government but simply in terms of looking at Australia's future interests. They are saying if there is one thing that Australia must do that's going to protect the future for our children and their children is to make sure that we get the best technology into Australia so that we can add to our great extractive industries and our rural industries and increasingly competent manufacturing industry and services industry. And to do that we've got to ally to our own resources, human and natural resources, we have to ally the best available technology. And what these people are saying it is almost beyond belief. The man who leads a major party and who aspires to the prime ministership of this country should so recklessly put at risk the future interests of this country. This is not a peripheral issue.

TIERNEY: Apart from that though, most commentators are as one in declaring this as a particularly boring campaign?

PM: Well I can't really recall an election over recent years in which the media hasn't said that. I mean let me say this, we as politicians have to accept responsibility to a very large extent for what the calibre of the campaign is. But to some extent the media has to too. Let me make one particular point, as you've opened up with an issue Judy, properly which has international

PM cont: implications, the Multi-Function Polis. I have in the early parts of the campaign at times tried to talk about international aspects of Australia's position as related to this campaign, but the media hasn't been interested at all in talking about those issues. Now I think that the international ramifications of the position of the Government and of the Opposition are terribly interesting and very important for the future of Australia, but the media doesn't seem to be interested in carrying anything about it. Now I can't do anything about that.

TIERNEY: So what do our listeners think then. Good morning Edward.

CALLER: Hello. Mr. Hawke my question is on superannuation.

PM: Yes Edward.

CALLER: Mr. Hawke, on the Nine Network program on Sunday the eleventh of March, when you were asked if some super funds would be worse off because of the capital gains tax you said no. You said the superannuation funds can totally use imputation credits to offset the fifteen per cent tax. Mr. Hawke this statement is not correct, not truly correct, as it does not apply to the many superannuation funds which are capital guaranteed and only invest in government and bank-backed securities. As these capital ...

TIERNEY: Thank you Edward. I think that's quite, get to the point please and perhaps the Prime Minister would like to answer it.

PM: Well Edward, let me say this. What has been said in a sense more importantly than what I've said, look at what's been said by the major funds - the AMP, National Mutual, they've said they didn't pay any tax in this last year on their super funds and they've made it quite clear, as is the fact, that because of the decisions that we made in 1988 Edward, it is up to the management of the funds to use the law, the provisions of the law in a way which is going to maximise the benefit for their fund members. And the simple indisputable fact is this - that if a fund chooses to use the opportunity of investing in Australian equities, which is what we were about in 1988 to increase the fund of savings for Australian business so that this would reduce the reliance on overseas borrowings, if they do that they can get the full strength of imputation credits. And that's the law and that's what increasingly competitive funds will have to do.

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TIERNEY: Thank you Edward. We've got a number of calls, thank you very much Edward. Good morning Leigh.

CALLER: Good morning. Mr. Hawke my question gets back to the business of manufacturing exports for Australia.

PM: Yes Leigh.

CALLER: I'd like to commend obviously the initiatives the Government in terms of the leading edge technology and the science research areas, but I'd put it to you that much of the outcome of that is quite a few years away, you know, in other words a long lead time to get results from that sort of effort. I'm not saying that we shouldn't be making that sort of effort. But there are in my view and my immediate experience many manufacturers or many potential manufacturers with good ideas that need to be taken into the worldwide market and yet where they can't because of the small nature of the Australian market, the small size of the market here, they can't get those products out there without some sort of assistance. The film industry got a one hundred and fifty per cent tax credit, what's wrong with helping small manufacturers with new products, new inventions?

TIERNEY: We finally got to the question there. I think the Prime Minister understands it.

PM: Leigh, I do understand your question. Let me just briefly refer to the first part of your observations and then come to the guts of your question. It is the case Leigh of course, that with these fifty cooperative research centres that we're setting up we're going to bring together the best research capacities of CSIRO and the universities and the private sector, and I'm terribly excited about this as is the scientific community. You're right in saying we won't get the results tomorrow about that but we'll start to create these centres very, very quickly indeed and I believe it's going to, in the medium to longer term, have an enormously positive impact upon developing our manufacturing export capacity. But coming then particularly to what you've been saying, we have taken account of what you're talking about by adding to the existing scheme which is the Export Market Development Grant Scheme. We are now adding the new scheme which we outlined early in the campaign which is calculated directly to take account of what you say. That is by acknowledging that there are some very small enterprises which by themselves may not be able to have the impetus or the

PM cont: dynamic to take advantage of assistance. We are making provisions whereby associations can bring together groups of small businesses to get the advantage of the financial assistance that we are prepared to make available. So you're right in saying that we need some imagination, new direction in this and that's precisely what the new scheme is directed to doing Leigh.

TIERNEY: Thank you very much Leigh, and good morning Peter.

CALLER: Yes, good morning. Good morning Mr. Hawke.

PM: Good morning Peter.

CALLER: I voted for a change seven years ago and I'd like to congratulate you and your team for the excellent job you've performed in turning around our economy and our overall living standards which I feel have definitely improved. However three years ago you asked a percentage of the Australian population who had decided to either refinance their mortgages or become new homeowners to suffer for the surge in the economy which your government was responsible for. I for one, have done so during this period and have found it progressively harder as mortgage rates have increased. The question I'd like you to answer for me if you can, is why have our percentage of the population of Australia had to do our bit, pull our horns in to put it bluntly, while the remainder of the population who in large I guess would have smaller mortgages than those with floating interest rates, have not had to suffer these mortgage increases. Why ...

TIERNEY: Thank you Peter, I think the Prime Minister understands ...

CALLER: Why can you not give us some tax relief from the interest rate we pay over thirteen and a half per cent, or alternatively after three years lift the thirteen and a half per cent ceiling which will probably drop the rate slightly?

PM: Peter, a fair question. Let me make these points. It's a complex area of issues that you've raised. Let me go to this question of, part of what you're putting about possible deductions in tax in relationship to interest. That was something that was raised last year, you'll recall, when Mr. Peacock started his mini campaign and it was soon dropped because

PM cont: as we knew from our work that we'd done in Treasury there were just so many complications on both sides of the ledger that it's simply not possible to do it. Let me now go to the point more generally though Peter that in this economy it was a situation where the level of demand had increased so much in the housing area and the investment area that, if I could give you just a simple statistic Peter, in that last year consumption in Australia had increased by eight per cent and our production had only increased by four per cent so we had, right across the board Peter, in the area of housing, in the area of other investment, in the area of consumption more generally, we had to tighten monetary policy, lift interest rates so that we brought down the overall level of activity, in housing included because if we hadn't done that Australia would have continued to have a level of imports which was simply unsustainable. And Peter it wasn't as though we didn't have the other two arms of policy fairly tight - that is fiscal policy, for the fourth successive year my government as distinct from the blatantly dishonest advertising that I saw on television last night from Professor Hewson where he said we weren't cutting government expenditure. We've done what's never been done before, four successive years of real reductions, a seventeen billion dollar surplus, so that we were doing our bit there to try and help the savings exercise. And, as you know, restrain wages policy, we still had to tighten monetary policy. The important point for the future Peter, is this. That as a result of the tough decisions we've taken, and which you have shared in and I acknowledge the hardships involved, the banking system itself is now saying that ... and that interest rates will be coming off under the government's policies straight after the election. But the alternative Peter, is that with a wages blow-out and the blowing of the budget surplus which is involved in Peacock's policies, there must be not just a maintenance of high interest rates but a further increase. Those are the unavoidable facts.

TIERNEY: Thank you very much Peter. And it's interesting that we haven't had any calls on the MFP, on the Multi-Function Polis, very interesting indeed. Good morning Reg.

CALLER: Good morning Prime Minister.

PM: -- Good morning Reg.

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CALLER: I would have to preface my question by saying that I'm a fifty-three year old chap who at the moment is unemployed, and who is currently battling with his mortgage interest rates, I want to ask you since I've been a Labor supporter for all of my life, I ask you simply this - how this time around can you expect me to support you yet again?

PM: Well Reg, very simple. What you've got to ask yourself, I guess, is not just the past but the future, and so I'll just refer briefly to the past which you raise and I'll refer to the past as a basis for looking to the future which is important for you. Reg when I came to office in 1983, in the previous twelve months there had been an increase of a quarter of a million in the level of unemployed in Australia and we had a situation where there was the best part of eleven per cent of our population unemployed. Since I've been in office Reg, I've created jobs with my colleagues at a rate unheard of before in this country, and more than twice as fast as the rest of the world, five times faster than the conservatives, and twice as fast as the rest of the world. Now that's what we've done and I'm saying for the future, which is important for you, that under the policies of my government growth will continue, more jobs will be created whereas you have the certainty under Mr. Peacock of a wages explosion and a destruction of the budget surplus which will destroy the economy. They destroyed it at the beginning of the 1980s because they had wrong economic policies, and they have exactly the same prescription now. And let me say in regard to you in Tasmania, what you need to ask yourself is this question - how can you possibly vote for Mr. Peacock who in terms of his commitment to take billions of dollars out of the revenue which would be available for helping you in Tasmania and taking billions of dollars out of the Commonwealth revenue and shoving it into the pockets of the wealthiest in this country, the wealthiest one per cent and less of the population. To help pay to do that he's going to take another fifteen point seven million dollars off the Commonwealth grants to Tasmania. In my case every promise I've made in this campaign I've funded by my own savings, not another cent off the states. But you in Tasmania and every listener in Tasmania should remember this - you will have fifteen point seven million dollars taken off you by Mr. Peacock to help him shove billions of dollars into the pockets of the wealthiest one per cent.

TIERNEY: Thank you very much Reg, and good morning Fred.

CALLER: Good morning Judy, good morning Bob. I'm seventy-six years of age Bob, not a member of any political party. We've formed a group consisting of retired bank managers, investment officers etcetera, and we've come down strongly in favour of you continuing in government. Bob, Andrew Peacock seems to me to be cutting everything. He wants to cut the ABC in expenditure and sell to private enterprise. Medicare cuts, the rich may opt out therefore there'd be no funding and it would collapse. Social Security, cuts in expenditure, pensioners and those most in need will suffer. Environment - cut down our children's forests. Nothing on exports. And I'm worried on preferences, Bob, people should take care I think, voting UFG or Democrats, return the votes to Labor. What do you comment on that Bob?

PM: Fred, thank you very much for your comments. Can I pick up the major point in one sense. I think you say that you're seventy-six years of age and you're talking in some sense not just on behalf of the elderly but obviously you're concerned about the next generation by your reference to the environment. Can I just make this point in regard to our senior citizens Fred, that would reflect your concern. I guess again as regard to the previous listener, if you're going to make some judgement Fred, about the alternative parties, that is my Labor Party in the Government, or the conservatives, as a senior citizen you'd need to ask yourself well what did they do when they were in Government for seven years, what did they do? Well I'll tell you what they did. They cut, they cut, and deliberately cut the real value of the pension by two and a half per cent. They had the opportunity of giving substance to their rhetoric of concern about senior citizens but in seven years they deliberately cut the purchasing power of the pension by two and a half per cent. In my seven years I've increased it by over seven per cent, between seven and eight per cent, in real terms I've increased its value. And as a result of the increase to the pension that's coming in next month, that's already legislated for, the pension will become over twenty-five per cent of average weekly earnings which will be the highest proportion the pension will have had of average weekly earnings for more than forty years. So Fred on that area you are absolutely right to have this concern. Now going to the last point you made Fred, about preference votes. Again you're absolutely right. I can understand Fred, as no doubt you can, that if there is a person who really wants to cast a vote about environmental issues for instance, that they would cast their vote for a candidate who they think has that as their overwhelming concern. But in the end if you are concerned about

PM cont: the environment then you've got to make sure that your preference goes to the party which has the best record and the best policy on the environment, and there is no doubt where that is because on every major decision that my Government has made in Tasmania to save the Franklin, in Queensland to save the rainforests, the Daintree rainforests, from logging, to save the Kakadu from mining, to save the tall forests of Tasmania, on every single one of those decisions we have been vehemently opposed by the Opposition so Fred, you're absolutely right. People who want to vote their first preference for an environmentally inclined candidate they must give their effective vote, their second preference to Labor otherwise they will be voting against their own interests.

TIERNEY: Thank you very much Fred, and good morning Lance, I believe you're a pensioner. So what do you think of the PM's comments?

CALLER: Yes I'm an invalid pensioner and, well what I think of him I've already voted by post and I voted for Labor. I know ...

TIERNEY: But have you got a question? Have you got a question for the PM Lance?

CALLER: Yes. You've promised that a time will come when pensioners won't pay tax at all. Does this include tax on savings accounts?

PM: The position is quite clear Lance, and I thank you for your question. By the next year eighty per cent of people who are in receipt of pension or part pension will pay no tax and you have the commitment of the Government which we announced last year that by 1995 no person in receipt of a pension or part pension will pay any tax. No pensioner or part pensioner will pay any tax Lance.

CALLER: That includes savings accounts?

PM: Any person in receipt of a pension, pension or part pension, will not pay tax.

CALLER: No tax at all.

PM: That's the commitment.

TIERNEY: Good morning Vin.

CALLER: Good morning Judy, Prime Minister. Vin Barron, Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce -

PM: Yes, Vin.

CALLER: Prime Minister, it appears that Government is desperate for cash. I refer to small business and taxation and you have imposed required companies to pay 85 percent of their tax 28 days after the end of their financial year, that will cause between two billion and two and a half billion to be taken out of circulation on 28th July. That, to our reading will put more pressure on interest rates to rise and that is in fact if small businesses are able to borrow the money and we can say in Tasmania there are many small companies who will not be able to do so, but who will go out -

TIERNEY: Vin, Vin, I think the PM knows what you are talking about.

CALLER: ... 85 percent in 28 days and reintroduce quarterly company tax payments.

PM: Vin, let me, I understand your question, let me go to the various ramifications of it. It is true, as you say, that we have introduced changes which will require business to pay their, to meet their tax obligation somewhat earlier than they had before but I make these points about it. Firstly, you will still have an advantage over individual taxpayers in, in terms of the delay that you will have which is not available to individual taxpayers, individual taxpayers pay as they earn, businesses will still have a period of grace. Now, come on, Vin, let me answer the question please. And as far as international comparisons are concerned, Australian business will be still relatively advantaged compared to what the situation in most overseas countries is. Now thirdly, in regard to impact upon interest rates, these things have been taken into account by all that are making their predictions about interest rate impact and the fact is that the banking industry is making it quite clear, Vin, making it absolutely clear, that their assessment is on the basis of the policies of this Government that interest rates will fall after the election. And that is because, Vin, of two basic factors. One, that the policies that we've had in place before have achieved their result. In other words, we're getting a slowing down of the economy which means that we can therefore ease rates and the second thing is, of course, is that the cost of money to the banking system has been reduced since the early part of this year. So the assessment that has been made by the banking industry is the correct assessment, and that is that interest rates will fall.

CALLER: Banks here in fact, small businesses have been told that the banks are concerned that they will not be able to either lend them additional money because they're in so far now or the banks ... some problem with it, but the fact of the matter is that most of the small businesses just will not be able to and secondly the delay that business has in collecting its money. I mean, this isn't taken into account, it is taken into account in reintroducing quarterly payments.

PM: All I'm saying to you, Vin, is that, as you know, and you're not disputing what I'm saying, is that business will still have a period of grace and they're not required to pay their tax immediately. That is, that is an indisputable fact and it is also true that compared with the rest of the world, Australian business, in terms of the time when they have to meet their tax obligation, is favourably treated.

TIERNEY: Thanks Prime Minister and thank you Vin. And now to Mark in Devonport. Good morning, Mark.

CALLER: Good morning, Mr Hawke.

PM: Morning, Mark.

CALLER: My question is the largest problem in the world is overpopulation. ... our representatives to the world forum, what's your opinion of this problem?

PM: Well Mark, it is undoubtedly true that one of the major elements in the growth ... environmental problems, like the growth of Greenhouse emissions is a function of the rapid increase in the world population and that is a fact which is acknowledged by all the people who have been engaged in research in this area. I don't dispute that and indeed programs are being undertaken in many countries to, to try and get a reduction in the rate of growth of the world's population. In India, for instance, I could just give you some pretty dramatic illustrations of this, of the dimension of the problem. Their annual population increase now is more than the total population of Australia and they are pursuing policies there to try and restrict that rate of population growth and try and reach a point of stability. But that is some way ahead. Now, as far as Australia is concerned, I don't think it follows that because there is a population problem for the world as a whole that that means we should say that our population of 17 million in Australia is all that we should have. I mean, we are a very, very large continent. We have vast natural resources and I believe that there is a capacity to increase the population of Australia. So I think you've got to put it into two different categories. There is without question, a problem about explosion of population in the world as a whole - it doesn't mean, necessarily, that we haven't got room to increase our population in Australia.

CALLER: ... world's population is going to increase or double in about five or ten years time?

PM: No, not in, no, that's getting your, your geometric progressions in a rather explosive factor, but it is the case that we will be doubling the population in, in a period. I mean, if the present trends were to continue in a period which wouldn't be, wouldn't be congenial - I mean, it is the case that, as I say, all science concerned with it attribute the population explosion as one of the most significant factors in the growth of the Greenhouse effects and the problems that is causing for the rest of the world.

TIERNEY: And thank you Mark. Now we've got the calls banking up here so could you please keep your questions and answers very short?

PM: Sure.

TIERNEY: And Jackie. Good morning.

CALLER: G'day. You've changed your damning statement of last election to no child has to live in poverty in the 1990s. ... tell me why my two children still only have a \$50 week growth in ... budget and I what I can do to alleviate it?

PM: Well, Jackie, let's get the facts right and then we'll get the facts also about what I've done about it. The facts are that on the same day, not subsequently changed, so please get your facts right. On the same day in 1987 my policy speech, in the statement that was released, the statement was released, simultaneously with my speech, the words were there, spelt out in full. There will be no financial need for a child to live in poverty. Fact two -

CALLER: I'll accept that, but -

PM: Well, fact two, fact two, Jackie -

CALLER: (inaudible)

PM: ... fact two - let me go, go to the facts. The three major organisations in the community concerned with this area of welfare have said that the Prime Minister's financial pledge has been delivered. Fact three, that under the delivery of that pledge over \$2 billion per annum is being paid out to low income families. Fact four, what that means, that national aggregate term, let me give you what it means in terms of a low income family. A low income family where the single income is \$320 a week with three children, it means that that family is receiving, under my policies, \$110 a week tax free, which is equivalent to a wage increase of \$170 a week. And that is why the Brotherhood of St Laurence,

the Australian Council of Social Services and the Australian Institute of Family Studies have said and asserted last year that the Prime Ministerial promise has been delivered.

CALLER: Mr Hawke, my family is definitely a low income family, we have \$190 a week to live on and I have two children. Now you can't tell me that that -

PM: I am telling, I'll tell you exactly what you get, I'll tell you exactly what you get from here, from the studio, without the figures ... I'll tell. What are the age of your two children? You tell me the age of your two children, so I'll tell you what you get per week?

CALLER: I, I -

PM: ... you tell me what the ages of your children are, Jackie, and I'll tell you what you get?

CALLER: ... nine. I know what I get.

PM: Well, what are the ages of your children and I'll tell you what you get.

CALLER: Five and nine.

PM: Well, I'll tell you, Jackie, that for those two children, five and nine, for each of them you'd get an amount of \$24.15 a week for each of them, which is, you get under, just under \$50 a week tax free in respect of those two kids.

TIERNEY: What's your income Jackie?

CALLER: My total income, including what Mr Hawke just stated, my child allowance supplement, is \$190 a week.

TIERNEY: ... not a lot to live on is it Jackie?

CALLER: It's not a lot to live on, no. I have two mortgages to pay, I gave up my rent allowance in order to buy my house so that I could be a little bit self sufficient and, as I say, I lost my rent allowance in the effort - now I pay rates and taxes instead.

PM: == You're paying two mortgages, Jackie?

CALLER: Paying two mortgages.

PM: You're paying -

TIERNEY: Why two mortgages?

CALLER: Paying two mortgages -

PM: Jackie, just let's get this straight then. You're paying two mortgages, two mortgages off.

CALLER: Pardon.

PM: You're paying two mortgages a week off?

CALLER: I'm paying off two mortgages.

PM: How much, how much do you pay on the mortgages?

CALLER: I pay a total of \$134 a fortnight off my mortgages, both of them.

PM: So two mortgages a week. So that's 75, that's \$77 a - I'm sorry, \$67 a week you pay in mortgages.

CALLER: That's right. It's more than I was paying rent, that I got a rent allowance to help me with.

PM: You certainly get a rent allowance. You get a, you get a rent, under our policies, you got a rent allowance if you were renting privately, you got a rent allowance.

CALLER: Yes, when I was renting privately I got a rent allowance.

PM: Of course you did.

CALLER: ... taken away as soon as I bought a home.

PM: Well, if you'd bought a home and, and you've got your home, by definition Jackie, an allowance which is paid to a person renting privately, by definition, doesn't apply. I mean, you weren't expecting it as well as paying the highest amount ever that any Government's ever paid in child allowances and that where we were paying also an additional allowance to persons renting privately, that you should be allowed to keep the private rent allowance if you'd bought a house. You're not suggesting that are you?

CALLER: Mr Hawke, that is exactly what happened to New Zealand.

TIERNEY: Jackie ... interested in what happens in New Zealand. Look, we've got a number of calls. I think you've had a fairly good go there and we go now to Helen in Launceston. Morning Helen.

CALLER: Morning. Good morning Mr Hawke.

PM: Good morning Helen.

CALLER: Unfortunately the coalition has only recognised prior to this election that there are women in the community and that we have needs and that we have a real voice at the next election held next, on Saturday. My question is that I recognise what's been done by the Labor Party through Ros Kelly and Sue Ryan. I just ask

you Prime Minister for a continued commitment to provide retraining opportunities for women who wish to return to the workforce, to retain the family allowance and to continue with the commitment that you've already shown.

TIERNEY: That's two questions, Helen. Perhaps just a -

PM: I give you that commitment, Helen, and let me, let me make this point that there are two principles Helen, and may I say Judy to you and all your listeners, there are two principles that have driven me and my colleagues in our attitude to our, our policies for women. One is social justice and social equity. I mean, it is absolutely intolerable that we should have a society that I should have inherited to Government in 1983 where there were barriers to women in employment and the range of occupations which they could fill. So it was socially intolerable that 50 percent of the population should have these barriers against them. So, that's been ... Secondly, there's also a question of economic good sense. This country was not making it possible to tap into the great talents of 50 percent of the population and so we've done all the sort of things that you've talked about, Helen, and I give you that continuing commitment. But in, in a continuing sense, into the future, I think the most important thing that we're doing, Helen, is that we're ensuring, in cooperation with the States, the whole education system is going to be transformed so that when a girl goes to school she will be confronted with the same opportunities throughout her educational life to be trained and equipped for any vocation or profession or calling that she wants to follow. I mean, what Australia has to understand is that of course women are going to find their fulfilment, in one sense, in being the wife and mother, some of them - that's all they will want to do and that should be respected - but increasingly in our Australian society and in the rest of the world, women are also seeing their opportunity for fulfilment in doing as well as that, also having jobs in the paid workforce. And as a concerned and intelligent society we must pursue policies which are going to enable them to do that. And we will.

TIERNEY: Thank you very much, Helen. Good morning, Steve.

CALLER: Good morning, Sue.

TIERNEY: Judy actually.

PM: Good morning Steve.

CALLER: Good morning Bob. Look I'd like to take you away from the very important things you've been talking about to something which is important in a different way. OTC is closing down quite a number of marine radio stations. Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide and Brisbane. Eugene Alexander has given a commitment to have this

decision reviewed and to prevent the closure of the Hobart marine radio station which, if it is closed, will threaten the safety of Tasmania's many, many fishermen and even more pleasure boat -

TIERNEY: Yes, so what's your question, Steve?

CALLER: Well, will the Prime Minister confirm that a review of this action would be taken especially for Hobart and would he try to please prevent this happening?

PM: Steve, I, I'll be quite honest. I wasn't aware of that decision that you're talking about of closing down these. I will give you the undertaking that I will certainly personally undertake to have a look at what the factual situation is. I will certainly ask for a review of it to be given. I mean, if that decision has been taken I'll ask for the reasons and if I'm not persuaded that there are compelling reasons, I would ask for it to be changed.

TIERNEY: Has been a big issue down here Mr Hawke and it does, on the surface at least, seems to put fishermen especially at risk in some of our waters around the coast.

PM: Well, yes, well that's not something that on its face I find acceptable. But, Steve, I always try to be absolutely honest in these things. What I'm say to you ... so you understand what I'm committing myself to. I'm committing myself to become acquainted with, I'll be asking to be told what the facts are and I'll indicate that prima facie I'm not happy about it and unless I can be satisfied that there are the compelling reasons for doing it, I would ask for the decision to be changed.

CALLER: Well, thank you very much.

TIERNEY: If the decision isn't changed, fishermen will have to spend I think it's six to eight thousand dollars per boat to tap into the system.

CALLER: And -

PM: Steve, you can be assured that I will have the question looked at.

CALLER: Thank you.

TIERNEY: Thank you very much Steve. Good morning Joyce.

CALLER: Good morning. Good morning Mr Prime Minister.

PM: Good morning Joyce.

CALLER: I'm an old age pensioner.

PM: Yes.

CALLER: ... paying a mortgage off. Now I am paying off \$267 a fortnight out of ... pension. Now with mortgage and rates, that's \$118 a fortnight goes out of that, which does not leave me very much to live on with, by the time you buy your food, you pay your ... telephone -

TIERNEY: So what's your question Joyce?

CALLER: ... what I want to know, is a Labor Government in the future, intend those people who can't help themselves by putting a roof over their heads, particularly if they're on a pension.

PM: Joyce, I mean, I hope you were listening to what I said earlier. The, the performance of this Government in the seven years we've been in office has been quite outstanding. Look at the things that we've done. I contrasted it with what happened before where they slashed the real value of the pension. We've increased it by about eight percent, increased the real purchasing power of the pension. When we came to office, the pension, as a proportion of average weekly earnings was 22.7 percent. Now, next month, as a result of the decisions already taken, that will go to over 25 percent of average weekly earnings which, Joyce, will be the highest proportion that the pensioners had of average weekly earnings in more than 40 years. In addition to that, as you would have heard me say, we've also made arrangements for additional ... entitlements where people are renting privately and we've also moved to a situation where by 1995 no person in receipt of a pension or part pension will be paying any tax. Against that record of unsurpassed achievement you have a situation where Mr Peacock has got unfunded promises of about \$7 billion which include, may I say, this sort of proposition, Joyce, that they'll take billions of dollars out of their own revenues which would be available to assist the aged, to shove those billions of dollars into the pockets of the wealthiest one percent in the population so that that will take it away from a capacity to help you. In addition, I'll tell you what their tax policy is and I would hope that all the people in Tasmania would, would note this and understand the significance of it. They are promising to change the tax system to bring in what they are pleased to call a flatter rate two tiered system. And what that means that Mr Peacock, as Prime Minister, would give himself a cut of over \$100 a week in tax and that a person on average weekly earnings, at about \$28,000, a cut of \$4.73. In other words, he'd give himself \$100 a week greater tax cut than he would to the average person out there. So whether you're an aged person or a person in employment, what you see is the stark picture of a group of conservatives dedicated to increasing the privileged ... the few in this country at the expense of the many, including the pensioners of Australia.

TIERNEY: Thank you Joyce, and Prime Minister, do you have time for one more call?

PM: Just one more, yes, thanks.

TIERNEY: Good morning, Beryl, you're the lucky last.

CALLER: Good morning Judy, good morning Mr Hawke.

PM: Good morning Beryl.

CALLER: ... I am, I've just been made a war widow, but I've just discovered that I'm 40 percent better off under a Labor Government. It was something I'd never searched into -

TIERNEY: So what's your question, Beryl?

CALLER: The question is, as I am petrified of a coalition government wrecking what was once a marvellous hospital care, not for me, but for mine.

PM: Well, thanks, Beryl. I can assure you that as far as I'm concerned, personally and my Government, we have a total and continuing commitment to those of our veterans community and I'm pleased to say that Sir William Keys, who was the head of the RSL for so long and a man with whom I established a close working relationship, has said that the record of this Government is outstanding in this area. And as far as the veterans community is concerned, let me say this - that I give an unqualified commitment to keeping the, the Ministry of Veterans Affairs as a separate, as a separate portfolio and that as far as the hospitals are concerned, we will continue to ensure that they provide a, a basis for giving the service that all members of the veterans and their widows need. It's been for me a matter of continuing concern because I'm a soft touch in this area, Beryl, as every member of my Cabinet will tell you. My late father was a chaplain in the Hollywood Repatriation Hospital for a period of some 30 years and so I grew up, as a child, knowing the importance of what our community owes to our veterans, to our veterans themselves and to those dependent upon them. So you have my continuing commitment, Beryl.

TIERNEY: Thank you Beryl. And you say you're a bit of a softie, Prime Minister, you got the, got a touch of the last minute nerves this week?

PM: No, not nerves. I'm neither cocky nor complacent, Judy. I, I have tried my hardest in this campaign to do the two things that I think I have to do. I think what Australians want of their Prime Minister in a campaign is two things. They want him to tell them what the policies are, why he's done the things he has and what he promises for the future of this country. I've tried to do that. I think they also expect me to expose what I see as the

inadequacies of the Opposition. I've tried to do that, but overall my campaign has been a, a deliberately positive one in which I have been available at all times to answer questions that anyone, including the media, want to put to me. I hope I've done that well. I feel confident without being cocky.

TIERNEY: Well thanks much for spending time with us.

PM: It's been a great pleasure Judy. Thank you to you and your listeners.

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