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PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS CONFERENCE, NEW TAKANAWA PRINCE HOTEL,
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E & OE - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: So what does it look like, ...?

PM: Well one of the things that's impressed me very much is there is absolutely no knocking of Melbourne, which is a good basis. It's a great reflection, I believe, on the team that has been led by John Ralph. They've been very positive in their presentation but they haven't been knocking other candidates. We've acknowledged the virtues of other cities that are trying to get the nomination. But they have been concentrating on the intrinsic merits of Melbourne and I think that seems to me to be paying off in the reaction of others. I think, as I've said from the beginning, as you know, that if it's decided on the intrinsic merits I think Melbourne must have a second to none chance.

JOURNALIST: Will you be a part of the presentation tomorrow and if so what will you be saying? We're from Atlanta.

PM: Ok. The answer to the first part of your question is yes and the answer to your second question is I'm not a sucker.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, the Greeks are offering I think a three day to trip to everyone around the Greek Islands as an incentive. Are you inclined to offer them a holiday on the Gold Coast if they take the Melbourne ...?

PM: What about the Barrier Reef?

JOURNALIST: Is this on the agenda this sort of - I won't say bribery but -

JOURNALIST: Greeks bearing gifts.

PM: You're saying beware of the Greeks bearing gifts. No, no, no. What we are doing which I think is very relevant to the Olympic spirit is in terms of travel and accommodation. We are offering a deal whereby for the first 100 athletes and officials of each country at US\$350 per person then we'll cover the travel and accommodation. That's not a gimmick. I think it's a very realistic offer because one of the problems that's suggested about Australia is the distance. It is for so many. And that is a legitimate

concern for many so that offer is directed towards that concern.

JOURNALIST: Is there a concern that some of the other countries are doing the hard sell, like Athens to...?

PM: I'm not here and I won't at any stage knock any other competitor. Each city goes about pushing their bid in the way that they think is appropriate. That's for them to decide. You won't hear me or I think you won't hear any Australian here knocking any other competitor. I think every competitor is sincere and each one has got some merits. I just believe that Australia's task is to sell its bid on the basis of its merits and not to knock anyone else.

JOURNALIST: How much do you think Australia's softly softly approach is impressing the delegates?

PM: I've been told that it is impressed. They've been impressed about the way in which we've just quietly not said vote for Melbourne, vote for Melbourne but giving them information as to the merits of Melbourne. I think that's the way to go.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, what odds would you offer on that?

PM: As you know I'm a punter and I always like to study the form right up until the last minute before I place my bets. I've still got a lot of form studying to do.

JOURNALIST: Hellenic, the favourite, came second in the English St Leger classic at the weekend. Do you think we should see that as an omen?

PM: I suppose we're always prepared to see anything in the races or the tea-leaves or whatever. But as I say, we're in there on our merits.

JOURNALIST: You were speaking to the Greek delegates in there a moment ago. Could you tell us what you said to them?

PM: Well yes, and I can tell you what they said to me. Firstly I said you should feel that if Melbourne does triumph that Greece should have a real feeling of association because I said Melbourne is the third largest Greek city in the world, which is true. They appreciated that and very interestingly they said this. They said if Melbourne wins we'll feel less bitterness than if anyone else does. That's very very significant.

JOURNALIST: Why is that significant?

PM: Well I mean I think it sort of indicates, you know, they feel very strongly about the centenary aspect of the bid and one can understand that argument. I think the fact that they acknowledge that feeling about Melbourne is, I

think it just indicates that the country that many regard as the sentimental favourite, if they have that feeling towards us it's helpful I think.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, we couldn't let you go without commenting on a couple of sporting events over the weekend.

PM: Yes.

JOURNALIST: I know there's a London rule against this sort of thing.

PM: It's flexible when it comes to sport.

JOURNALIST: Thank you. Can we ask you how you feel about Wayne Gardiner's victory and the Raiders?

PM: Fantastic for Wayne Gardiner. I've had the opportunity of meeting and knowing Wayne over a fair bit of time and his lovely wife Donna. They've been into my office. I have great respect for him not just as a sportsman but as an Australian ambassador. It was thrilling to see him get back to back victories in the Phillip Island Grand Prix and for Australia to take off the quinella was fantastic. Now the Raiders, you know, a great achievement. Quite seriously, for a Canberra club to be in the three grand finals is a tremendous tribute to all who are associated with the club. Of course if they could pull off the three premierships would be fantastic.

JOURNALIST: What's the chance of that do you think?

PM: The trifecta?

JOURNALIST: I meant the Raiders victory in the major grand final.

PM: I think they'll win. I've been tipping them all year so they must.

PM: Prime Minister, the Sydney Morning Herald said this morning that you changed your position on the invasion of Panama -

PM: Could you explain this, the London convention to the gentleman.

JOURNALIST: (inaudible)

PM: Those who've been around longer, I mean, will you just explain the London convention to him mate.

JOURNALIST: ... it was a declaration.

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