



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH THE HON JOHN BROWN,
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BROWN: I've been joined in the studio by the Prime Minister of Australia, Bob Hawke. Good morning Prime Minister.

PM: G'day John.

BROWN: Good to see you here.

PM: Good to be here mate.

BROWN: Looking hale and hearty.

PM: Feeling well.

BROWN: Golf handicap of 16.

PM: Yes mate. Still prepared to try and get your money ...

BROWN: You've been getting it too regularly mate. I'm a bit worried about this. I'll have to stop giving you lessons. Well you're now the longest-serving Labor Prime Minister and the second longest-serving Prime Minister in Australian history, second only to Sir Bob Menzies, having replaced Malcolm Fraser as the second longest-serving Prime Minister. You of course were brought up in Western Australia. You attended the Perth Modern School together with John Stone, Billy Snedden, Garrick Agnew and other luminaries on the Australian scene. Your father was a Congregational minister and a chaplain through the war. And I guess to a great extent your view of our returned soldiers was fashioned by your experiences with your dad and the repat hospitals.

PM: Yes, dad was an army chaplain, as you say. And then after the war he went back into the church and was part-time chaplain at the Hollywood Repatriation Hospital in Perth and then he became full-time chaplain there. He did that for over 20 years. So I got to know at first hand through dad, the concerns of the veterans themselves, but also the sense of obligation as a community we should have towards them. It became instilled into me very early.

BROWN: Well one of the highlights of your Prime Ministry given that background must have been the trip to Gallipoli this year Prime Minister.

PM: It's impossible to describe John the impact that had on me and I think on everyone that went there. As soon as you see the place you realise the impossibility of the mission that was given the troops and the gallantry, the sheer heroism of them going in and staying there for that period of time. I actually went down and got into the trenches, walked along the trenches and I had the advantage of having a military bloke with me who's an historian in this area. You're just overwhelmed by the, as I say, the gallantry and the heroism. You could see why this did shape, it shaped the Australian nation. We'd only been one nation for 15 years then. We'd just been previously these six battling colonies. We'd become one nation on January 1, 1901. This was what shaped a sense of Australia. I was just moved beyond measure by it.

BROWN: I think we all had that feeling back here in Australia, listening to the radio reports, particularly those from Brian White, the late Brian White.

PM: Yes, marvellous.

BROWN: ... this station of course. He was on that trip with you.

PM: Yes, he was.

BROWN: And also the television cover, as vague as it seemed to be in the morning light listening to those -

PM: One of the great things about that early morning service I think that touched me more than anything was you had already there in place, they'd been there overnight, young Australian tourists, teenagers and 20 year olds. There they were, eager, and then up came these old veterans, the average age of over 90, just making their way up past these young Australians. The bonding that took place between them, the just outpouring of affection from the youngsters for the old veterans and the way which the veterans responded to them, it was like all the generations of this century coming together and recognising what the young owed to the old and the way in which the old were proud of the young. It was very moving.

BROWN: They were a wonderful bunch of old diggers weren't they. They're all of them in their 90s and -

PM: Yes, amazing.

BROWN: I think there's been a couple of them have died since.

PM: Yes, there has been.

BROWN: I mean when you think about blokes like Jack Ryan.

PM: Jack Ryan is a remarkable fellow.

BROWN: He's the joie de vivre of the -

PM: Old flirt. He flirted with Hazel from the time he met her. Incurable, the old Jack. He's a lovely man. Of course we were able to get him his new little chihuahua and he loves that little dog.

BROWN: What, since he's come back?

PM: Yes, he'd had one before and it had gone so we organised this new one. He just is a remarkable character Jack Ryan. Very very fine man.

BROWN: And I suppose in lots of ways he's representative of the spirit of ANZAC.

PM: Yes. Well when you see the physical conditions John under which those blokes had to exist, then without that laconic sense of Australian humour and mateship I don't think they could've survived. They would've gone mad. Because it was not just the pressure of fire from the Turks in the superior position above them where they were able to pick them off day and night. But it was the lice, fleas, and the physical conditions were just unbelievable. Men lost 20, 30, 40, 50 pounds. It was just unbelievable.

BROWN: Your uncle had been a Labor Premier in West Australia had he not? I guess that's where your political beliefs were fashioned, from your family background and your uncle's influence.

PM: Yes, and my parents. My uncle was a Labor Member of Parliament. He used to come to our place in Perth at least once a week for a meal and it was certainly how a lot of my political thinking shaped there. But also very much by my dad and mum. They weren't sort of Party members or anything like that. But their philosophy was clearly one of what you should be about in life is trying to help others and the sense of commitment and obligation that you have if you've got talents and time and so on that that ought to be used to try and make the community a better place and help those less fortunate than yourself. So it was a combination of my dad and mum and my uncle that shaped my philosophy.

BROWN: I remember sitting in your office in Canberra one Sunday morning a couple of years ago and we were putting together those advertisements for Buy Australia. The ubiquitous Singo was sitting there and he said to you, now look Prime Minister, he said, I know you've got awards from around the world. He said you've got awards from the International Labor Organisation in Vienna, you've got an award from the Government and the people of Israel, you're the recipient of the Commander in the Order of Australia which makes you the highest level of Australia -

PM: Companion, mate. Companion.

BROWN: Companion sorry, Companion in the Order of Australia. You've had all sorts of adulation. You've been Father of the Year. You've been Australian Prime Minister for all these years. He said to you that day, I reckon you'd swap all of those things if once you could've worn the green and gold and competed for Australia in a sporting event. Was that a true statement?

PM: It was a true question but I wouldn't have. I mean if I couldn't have done these things I would have loved to have played cricket for Australia. But I wouldn't swap anything for the indescribable honour of being the Prime Minister of the best country in the world. That's what this country is. And to be Prime Minister of it is, you wouldn't swap anything for that. Nothing.

BROWN: Not even a baggie cap?

PM: Not even a baggie cap. Not even a baggie cap.

BROWN: Well I suppose -

PM: Not even Dean Jones' baggie cap.

BROWN: Well I suppose in a very real sense you've played for Australia every day for the last 25 years or so in public life.

PM: ... been in public life now for over 30 years. I went to the ACTU in 1958 and became sort of well-known as the advocate and research officer. In 1959 I was conducting all the cases and then in the present in 1970. So I've been there in public life for about 30 years now. It's been a great experience.

BROWN: Now listen, we're in a real capitalist world here. We're going to take a break and -

PM: Got to make a quid mate.

BROWN: Got to get a quid for the station.

(commercial break)

BROWN: Prime Minister, you must have had high spots and low spots in your career as Prime Minister. Tell me, what have been the high spots? Let's go to the good stuff first.

PM: Well the high spots. One of the higher spots - you've already referred to the visit to Gallipoli. It is really in one sense just on a plateau by itself. There is nothing that can quite match that. Without being exhaustive about it, I mean the conference, the Special Premiers' Conference we just had in Brisbane a while ago, it's not a sexy thing. You know it doesn't jump out and say wasn't that marvellous. But in terms of the future of this country that was a highlight because for the first time we had a Prime Minister sitting down with the Premiers of every State, and Chief

Ministers of the Territories. They all agreed with me that we had to work together to make this a better country, make the governments of Australia better. We've set down a process and things are happening which will mean that your listeners, the ordinary citizens of this country are going to get a better delivery of services because we're going to have the good sense to work together and not against one another. That was for me a very very important highlight. I also, you can't point to a particular time when this happened, but to be able to change the education participation rates in this country was a great thing for me. When we came to office you only had one in three of our kids staying on in school and we committed ourselves to changing that. We've turned that right round now so it's two out of three of our kids. When I go to the schools and into the education system and see now that it's not a question of money, wealth or privileges as to whether kids stay on but they are all now moving to stay on in the education system. If they've got the talents then to be trained further in the tertiary system or the technical system or the apprenticeship system. That for me in a long term sense is probably the thing that I get the most pleasure out of John.

BROWN: But I can recall in your early days as Prime Minister being very proud of the fact that a lot of the divisions in the community had receded, in fact disappeared, and that we weren't at one another's throats.

PM: ... recalling that summit in '83 when I thought we were as a nation just dissipating ourselves by fighting one another. You had unions fighting employers, everyone seemed to be at one another's throats. So calling that summit and getting the employers, the governments, the trade unions, community welfare organisations, local government, getting them all together, they'd never before met. They committed themselves to trying to work together rather than fight one another. That was very much a highlight for me. It's worked. I mean we now have in this country 60% less industrial disputes than we had when I came to office. That's a highlight for me. I think Australians do work together better than they did before. I certainly appreciated what you were saying before at the beginning of your program this morning, that we've got to understand that we've got an enormous number of advantages in this country. We've had to slow things down. I know that people, some people, are hurting and it's a matter of sorrow for me. But really we're going to come back very, very much stronger as we go through 91. If we remember that we depend upon one another and we've got to help one another, continue that spirit of the Summit then I think we've got an enormous future as a nation.

BROWN: I won't get on to sport yet cause that's a different thing. Tell me about a few of the low spots, you must have had some low spots.

PM: I have had some low spots. I think for me the continuing lowest - I mean it's not just one time but it continues, in a sense, to be a low spot for me, was the way in which a great positive achievement by this country, and not just by me and the Government, but a great positive achievement by this country has been made into a negative. I refer to the question of children in poverty. When we came to office we had a situation where the Government, the Federal Government, was not doing very much of significance for low income families and children and this worried me. We did a number of particular things. Then as I went up to the 1987 election I'd prepared with people involved, Brian Howe and others, we got this idea that we would, as a Government, really pay an enormous amount of money to low income families so that there'd be no financial need for any child in this country to live in poverty. We made it a highlight of the 1987 election and we've poured, by the Family Allowance Supplement, we've poured, each year over a billion dollars directed right into the lowest income families in this country. In the speech that I delivered here in Sydney in the Opera House, in explaining what we're going to do, I'd set it all out in the major written attachment to the speech, and said we would create a situation where there would be no financial need for any child to live in poverty. In the written speech I said our goal will be that no child will live in poverty by 1990. Now I've been hounded and the Government's been hounded with that, of course, there are children living in poverty now but no-one acknowledges the fact that we delivered on our promise that there'd be no financial need. We have delivered what we did with the money, well over a billion dollars a year, to those in need. The welfare organisations have acknowledged that this is more than, not only has ever been done in this country, but there's no country in the world which matches what we've done in meeting that financial commitment to look after kids in low income families. Now of course you can't deal with the situation where the kids leave home and the money is not used by the parents to look after the kids. I mean, unless you're going to live in a totally Draconian society, a totally command economy, you can't deal with that. We've delivered something that's never been done anywhere else. A massive delivery of money to the families of low income people where the kids are. Yet that -

BROWN: In a home environment.

PM: In a home environment. That achievement which is recognised by those in the welfare sector as unmatched in the history of this country, unmatched in any other country, that great achievement just gets lost in this cry about no child live in poverty in 1990. That's a continuing hurt for me.

BROWN: Yes, well I guess it's a measure of the way that the things can be twisted around. But I suppose you still must smart and hurt at the spectre of homeless kids -

PM: Sure.

BROWN: As you explained, there's really not much you can do to assist those kids that aren't living in the home environment. You can assist families -

PM: Although in respect of creating funds with the States for shelters, we've put an enormous amount of money, another \$40 million just the year before last which we put into that. More money than has ever been put before into providing funds for shelter for the homeless you can do that but in any society there are always going to be some who fall through those safety nets you create. I just think it's terribly sad, you know, that there's this political opportunism that says, well you know just bang, bang, bang no child should live in poverty, and ignoring the fact that in regard to the specific promise that we made - and that as a community we are benefiting from - that we write all ourselves down by not acknowledging and I think that's sad.

BROWN: Still the Press tends to run away with things. I remember having a conversation with you a couple of weeks ago, you were telling me about a visit you had to Melbourne one Friday and a couple of nice stories and then the story that appeared on the Sunday's press. Tell us that story.

PM: Well, I went down to Melbourne to do two things of very, very considerable significance. In the morning we went out to the western suburbs of Melbourne to open this new unit of the Western University. First time it had a university in Melbourne in the western suburbs and this was one unit of it. It meant that the kids out, and not just the kids but the adults that wanted to go on in tertiary studies, were now having the opportunity of doing it out in the western suburbs rather than going to where the universities always were in the more affluent sections. That was terribly important and then in the afternoon I went and opened a tyre factory. Pacific Dunlop group were opening it. It will be the most modern, state-of-the-art tyre factory, with big tyres - these are for trucks. The most modern, state-of-the-art factory in the world, will have better productivity than anywhere, will be exporting a very significant proportion of its total production. So the Press were there at the university they were there at this factory which is competitive, beat anything in the world, adding to Australia's exports. They followed me around, we had a press conference and I was asked about that fellow the ex-diplomat who said he was going to go -

BROWN: Go to Iraq as an envoy.

PM: He was going to go to Iraq and in the end didn't go. He'd made a quite incorrect statement about Australia's involvement and I'd corrected him. I hadn't gotten into any vicious attack but had corrected him and said what he said was wrong.

BROWN: You didn't call him a silly old bugger.

PM: No, I didn't. Whatever I thought about him I didn't say that. I just factually corrected him. So what was all the Press story about. Not about the university in the western suburbs. Not about Australia's new most modern in the world state-of-the-art tyre factory but about Hawke having a proper go and a warranted go at this fellow who was telling untruths about Australia's involvement in the Gulf. Now that sort of thing I find sad.

BROWN: But wasn't there, the same weekend, a story about you being at Frank Lowy's birthday party?

PM: Yes that was a good one. That was a good one. I was flying down there that day. I think it was a Friday. I was flying down there. I was looking at the Sydney Morning Herald and I read through it and I got up to the financial page and I was reading that and then I saw this caricature of Frank Lowy who is a friend of mine, has been for zonks of years, well before he became rich and famous.

BROWN: He was a mate of mine when he had a smallgoods run.

PM: Yes he had a smallgoods, yes that's right. So I said what's this about. So I read it and it said last Saturday night there was big party to celebrate the 60th birthday of Frank Lowy. There were many celebrity people there from the world of politics and business including Bob Hawke who, according to all accounts, this was the phrase, who according to all accounts made a highly emotional speech.

BROWN: Highly emotional speech.

PM: The only problem with that is that Bob Hawke didn't speak. I was there, I didn't speak. But there was this phrase, according to all accounts. I mean, what do you do?

BROWN: Look we'll come back to this in just a moment. We've got a few advertisers here who want the ears of our listeners.

PM: Good on them.

(Commercial break)

BROWN: Prime Minister, you're sitting in here with me and we're delighted to have you. On the line we've got Commodore Don Chalmers of the HMAS Darwin who's steaming down the east coast on the way home from their service in the Gulf. We've arranged for you to speak to the Commodore.

PM: That's great.

BROWN: Your conversation with the Commodore and also with Captain Russ Shalders, who's also there, will be relayed to all the crew on the Darwin. I might tell you that there are 30 fathers of the sailors travelling round from Darwin with the lads on the Darwin. Good morning Commodore. Good

morning Commodore Don Chalmers. Hello have we got him there somewhere. Hello. Hello Commodore. I think we've lost him somewhere. We'll have to try and get the line back. Well we'll carry on with something else at the moment.

PM: It's exciting. I hope we do have the chance of talking to him John.

BROWN: We've lost the line somewhere. It's the magic of modern radio. But we'll get them back there somewhere. We were talking about high spots and low spots. I guess talking about Iraq it might be a question to ask you. People seem to think, in their mistaken view, that making a decision that you had to make about sending our sailors to Iraq is made as a political decision. You know, I've realised that the extraordinary impact this must have on your mind. The extraordinary impact that prime ministers in other times have had to shoulder that responsibility of making decisions about the lives of young men and women. I mean, exactly what sort of an impact does that sort of decision make on you?

PM: It's immeasurable. I mean, it's hard to describe. I mean, I just sat there by myself when I knew we were going to have to come to this and just sat closeted by myself thinking about it. Paradoxically, as I said, it was perhaps the most serious decision I've taken as Prime Minister but in the end one of the easiest because it was crystal clear in my mind, as I thought through it, what Australia's obligations were in this regard. I knew we had to be part of this process. I knew there was the risk of actual conflict. Risk of action in which people could be injured or even could die but we've come to a new time in world affairs where we have to be prepared to keep the world order in a condition where aggression will not be paid.

BROWN: Yes, I guess it must be an incredible responsibility to have to undertake as, of course, prime ministers and leaders of countries have done in the past. Roosevelt in the United States, Churchill, John Curtin in Australia. I suppose in the micro sense you've had to undertake to yourself the same responsibility. I know that it must bear very heavily on your mind. So there must be some joy in seeing these kids come back socially.

PM: It's marvellous.

BROWN: Seeing the hostages return. So we now have Commodore Don Chalmers on the line and your message will be relayed to the fleet, not just to the Darwin. Good day Commodore. How are you?

CHALMERS: I'm very well. How are you?

BROWN: Well I've got the Prime Minister sitting here. He'd like to talk to you.

CHALMERS: Thanks very much.

PM: Don, could I just say, personally, and on behalf of the Government, most importantly on behalf of the people of Australia, to you and the crews firstly how proud we are of the job you've done. You've been involved in a very, very large number of intercepts and actions which have been involved in making the sanctions works. So we're first of all very, very proud of you. We thank you for what you've done and we welcome you back to Australia so that you will be able to have Christmas and the New Year with your loved ones. I'm looking forward very much to coming out on the ship when you arrive off Sydney on the 21st so I can say directly to you and the men thank you for a job well done.

CHALMERS: Thank you very much indeed for those kind words. We certainly look forward to seeing you on our return to Sydney. I think, in you saying how proud you are of what we've done I must add that we, here, are particularly proud of what our men have done. All Australia can be proud of them. They've been particularly adaptable, they've improvised and most of all they've met absolutely every challenge that's been thrown at them.

PM: All the reports I've had, Don, confirm absolutely what you've said. It's not only the reports I get from our own service commanders but from what I hear from other forces, Australians, as always, have lived up to the challenge and they've performed mightily. Now of course the ships that are moving in - that have moved in to replace you are going into a position where there could be an even greater risk. But I know firstly that you, and they, will hope that that doesn't arise because neither the Government, the people, nor the forces of Australia want war but if conflict does arise I know that, as in the past, they will do this country proud. I never cease to have a great sense of pride about the way in which this small country has always accepted its share of responsibility. We are a nation that wants peace, loves peace but if it's necessary to fight to preserve peace then we're there.

CHALMERS: That's certainly true and I know that they're pretty well prepared to go into the Gulf and do what has to be done, if it has to be done, in the same way that we were. As you well know we left at very short notice, not really knowing what we were going towards and there's no doubt that these two ships that I'm bringing back now were in very good condition to face anything and indeed the ships themselves were too. Their serviceability was quite fantastic. When we arrived up in the Gulf all our mission critical systems were up and when we left they were still up. So not only have the men done well but the hardware we've got's done pretty well too.

PM: Well I'm very pleased to hear that, Don, because as everyone knows it was relatively short notice and that's, I think, a very considerable reflection upon the quality of our Navy that we are in a shape that when a crisis does occur that in a very short time we can put ourselves in a position to discharge the obligations that arise. Don, tell me all the reports I get are that the morale of the crews is high. Is that true?

CHALMERS: That's very true. Morale's very high. We are, I guess, pleased to be coming home for Christmas, for some short leave and some, and then maintenance for the ships, maintenance for ourselves and then back for another work-up and ready for a third deployment if that's required.

PM: Yes well of course I guess you, like myself, hope that that's not necessary but I know that that's precisely what you'll do if it's necessary.

BROWN: Now Don, it's John Brown here. Now I can tell you that the morale of those lads will be lifted when they see the reception they're going to get when they come back into Sydney on Friday morning. They can look forward to that with great anticipation, I'll tell you.

CHALMERS: We certainly will. I mean the support we've had while we've been away has been fantastic. You know, not only from our families who, I guess, we take for granted. We expect them to support us but the people of Australia, the thousands of school children that have written to us, it's really been absolutely fantastic. This sort of welcome home certainly changed from the last time we had forces overseas.

BROWN: Well it's been a thrill for our listeners to be able to correspond with you directly like that and thanks for coming on the line.

CHALMERS: Thanks very much.

BROWN: Thank you. Well that was Commodore John Chalmers on the Darwin steaming down the east coast on the way back after a triumphal visit on Australia's behalf to the Gulf of Oman, being part of that United Nations and world effort against the oppression of Saddam Hussein. Just getting back

to you, Prime Minister. I know you're a very affectionate man and a man who's extremely emotional on lots of things. There have been criticisms directed at you for the fact that you do show your emotions and I can recall two very dear friends of mine, two of the roughest, toughest blokes I know, Keithy Holman who had 24 tests against England in Rugby League and Johnny Raper who's an even tougher bloke than ... and they both said now listen you tell Hawkey nothing wrong with crying, ... I cried every time I ran out on the field for Australia. Raper says he cries every time he thinks about putting on an Australian jumper. So I don't think the criticisms have been valid and I think most people have been pretty happy to see that we've got a Prime Minister that is prepared to exhibit his emotions on some of these issues.

PM: Well I think you're made the way you are. It's been in a sense at times embarrassing I guess, that this happens. But that's the way I am and I can't undo it and I don't want to undo it -

BROWN: Neither you should.

PM: And I don't feel, you know, in the end embarrassed by it, John, though at times I suppose you wished it didn't happen. But that, as I say, that's the way I am and I think there's a lot of nonsense talked about it's manly not to show emotions. I think this is nonsense. I don't think really one should be ashamed if you feel deeply and it moves you at times to tears about a particular issue. Well, you know, that's it. I mean if you feel that way, that's the way it is.

BROWN: Well think about it, your daughter's illness, I mean a father would be less than human if he wasn't upset, not only about the problem but also enormously proud of the way the way in which she's coped with that -

PM: Magnificent.

BROWN: And then Tienanmen Square. I mean having those Chinese students with you. I mean you'd be less than a man if you didn't feel emotional about that.

PM: Yes in that particular instance too just before I went out there I just received this cable and it was just unbelievable, you know, the description of what had been happening there of the, you know, piling up the bodies and just crushing them to death and setting them on fire. I mean, God, just mind boggling.

BROWN: Less than human behaviour. We've got to go and earn another quid for the station but we'll be back in just a moment with the Prime Minister.

BROWN: Prime Minister, sport is an obsession that you and I both share and I guess you must take a great deal of pride in what's happened with sport since you've been Prime

Minister. Quite apart from the fact that the budget's gone from \$6M to \$60M, there's a lovely story in the Press today about John Newcombe out yesterday with some crippled kids in wheelchairs, teaching them to play tennis and you might recall that before I became your Minister for Sport the budget for the handicapped was zilch. Now it's a couple of million dollars. It's lovely to see these things. Now I'll ask you these questions in the context of Sydney's bid for the Olympic Games. I mean no doubt the Commonwealth will be having a good look at this, they don't want to be backing losers or chasing rainbows. What are your feeling at the moment?

PM: Well I've had a discussion with Nick Greiner and he's writing to me - in fact the letter may have arrived - I don't know but he'll be writing to me setting out what they need in money terms and also talking about trying to make land available for the Newington area, they're talking about there for -

BROWN: ... accommodation, yes.

PM: There may be some problems about that, not in attitude on our part but unexploded ordnance, we've got to have a look at that sort of thing because it's been used for these purposes for about 100 years. But I said to Nick, we'll be cooperative, they may want some up-front money they said and if they didn't succeed in their bid, well then they'd give the money back. So I'm going to look at his letter and we'll look at it very positively because you know, we supported the Melbourne bid before, we would've been happy to see them get it, they didn't, and if Sydney can go ahead with a realistic bid - and I would think they can - then it would be great for Australia if we could get it, absolutely great. The year 2000 would be very special and I know you'll be around and I certainly hope to be, John. But you look at what Sydney's got, I mean, there's not many cities in the world who've got what this great city can offer.

BROWN: You put the seal on Sydney's greatness as a modern city ... get those Games. I think we're a hell of a big chance.

PM: You know, we've been talking about it. It is the case that Berlin has had it now on a number of occasions, Germany's had it on a number of occasions. So there'd be some attitude that, you know, they've been around. Now Beijing, apparently there's some question about their capacity, the infrastructure and so on - quite apart from what attitudes will be lingering over from last year. There's no doubt that the Southern Hemisphere deserves to get it. I mean it is incredible that in 100 years the Southern Hemisphere has had it once. It just is unfair. When you look at the symbols, you know the five circles ... it's unfair.

BROWN: Yes, true. Of course Australia's record in the Olympic Games has been one in ...

PM: One in three countries ... every one ...

BROWN: An extraordinary record of success for a young country. It's wonderful. Now just on one final subject before you go. I'm not ambushing you on this. But on this program some 12 months or so ago you made the announcement that Greg Norman would be doing some ads for us following Paul Hogan and Lawsy questioned you about whether the money could become available and I think all Australia's waiting for Greg to be out there being the flag-bearer for Australia. I know Greg is waiting with anxious anticipation of going out there being the next Hogan. What's happening there? You know the Tourist Commission has a bit of money.

PM: I think you'll find that in a very short period that they'll be getting what they need to use one of our great drawcards and I think you'll be very happy in the near future.

BROWN: I'll tell you what a God Greg is in Japan. At Palm Meadows Golf Course - which you know very well - the big thing that the Japanese want to photograph is Greg Norman's locker in the club house. ... with a camera. I mean he really is ... status. We've got to go. Thanks for coming in, it's been a delight to have you here, Australia's second longest serving Prime Minister, someone who's done Australia extremely proud over your period. The polls aren't greatly in your favour at the moment but that's a transitory thing and no doubt you'll be back firing on all fours. Thank you for coming in.

PM: Thanks John and thank you very much and may I take this opportunity of wishing your listeners a very, very, merry Christmas and a happy new year.

BROWN: Thanks, Prime Minister.

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