



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, MP
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J: Prime Minister, one criticism of this is that's it not backed up by legislation.

PM: I think this Government has obviously, this is not a claim it is a fact, a second to none environmental policy in Australian politics. We're the people who have made all of the running on the environment in this country, preserved great areas for Australians - the Wet Tropics in Queensland, the Southern forests and Gordon below Franklin, Antarctica - there's a long list of things which the Government has chalked up successes and we will in this. That is, we'll get Australians to change and know that waste is a huge environmental problem and that they just can't be putting out the garbage can thinking it disappears. The land fills are not there any more and that we're going to have to be more careful about how we dispose of waste and if we do it carefully we can have a better society, a cleaner place and a more profitable place and it just requires some care. But it involves the whole community. Again it gets back to this inclusive approach, we say let's get the community involved. Our friends in the Coalition say let the Government do it and make decrees from the mount. The truth is with all of these programs you can only do them with community support and nothing needs that more than waste management.

J: Do you have any recycled paper in your office?

PM: I do, yes. Most of the time.

J: Was the speech on recycled paper?

PM: I don't know, have a look.

J: Prime Minister, what's your response to Premiers Kirner and Bannon's call for a slow down in tariff reduction?

PM: I haven't seen their document.

- J: But what do you think about their call for a slow down? They are not the only ones, they join the ACTU and business.
- PM: Let's see what they have got to say?
- J: Do you think it's the right time to be talking about the environment when we've got such high unemployment?
- PM: I think this is a very labour intensive industry. With paper recycling, for example a high proportion of the newsprint of Australia picked up and recycled, that's a very labour intensive thing to be doing. It is true, because it is community based it requires a substantial amount of labour, so it is a very labour intensive thing and I think what's going to happen is that the whole waste management and better environment movement is going to be, if anything, labour intensive and job creating.
- J: Are the unemployed going to be invited to the youth summit?
- PM: There will be representatives there yes.
- J: What's your reaction to Mr Greiner not accepting the findings of ICAC?
- PM: Mr Greiner and the NSW Liberals have a political rather than a criminal matter on their hands. Obviously it will have to be resolved politically.
- J: Will it have an impact federally?
- PM: Obviously, I don't think it will.
- J: What's your reaction to an ANZ Bank study which suggests that interest rates may be forced up if you persist with the 4 per cent compulsory?
- PM: There are studies and studies aren't there. We've all seen those.
- J: Prime Minister, on another matter there were reports from PNG that Australian helicopters over there are still being used as gunships.
- PM: That's a claim, we're investigating that claim. People who operate those helicopters are entitled to carry weapons to defend themselves, but they are not entitled to use the weapons in an offensive manner. So we are making the appropriate investigations.
- J: Prime Minister, consumer confidence in the polls this morning has slumped in that the poll was taken even before the high unemployment figure last month came out. What are you going to do about that?

PM: These things have been up and down over the course of the last twelve months so I think there's no doubt in my mind the economy in terms of output is recovering. The problem we are seeing is that the output is leading employment and we're going to see growth and production pick up, but not commensurate with employment, not for the moment - that always lags production and it's doing the same thing now.

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