



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER THE HON P J KEATING MP,
DOORSTOP, TRADES HALL, ADELAIDE, 9 AUGUST 1992

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J: Prime Minister, can we ask you about the opposition by the Left to the sale of Qantas, are you expecting problems getting it through?

PM: Well the Federal Secretary of the Labor Party has got that matter in hand, it's a process there and I expect we'll get a reasonable result from it. It's not easy making changes in Australia, it's the point I keep making to Dr Hewson. The reason we've had this closed domestic two airline policy which the Liberals gave us and Qantas flying outside of Australia and not being able to make it into one company and then sell it is basically because of the fact that nobody's ever taken these issues on in the political parties and we are and it's the right thing to do and I expect that the Labor Party will respond accordingly.

J: Are you prepared to over-ride the wishes of that segment of the Party?

PM: We've got proper processes, we'll see where they go.

J: Prime Minister given the disastrous standing of the Bannon Government in the polls, are you concerned about how that could impact on a Federal election result?

PM: Political fortunes come and go, people have written John Bannon off in the past and he's got up and won again and I think he will next time. These are not easy times, the 1980s were a period of growth right around the world, the 1990s haven't to this stage been and it's not easy living in an international environment with low growth and that's a problem for everybody. But again as I said in the Convention today that this Government is still making changes, we've just made revolutionary changes to vocational education, to airlines, to transport, to television all within the last couple of months. So we're pressing on and I think that initiative brings its own reward and the Bannon Government is doing the same.

J: On the 'Sunday' program this morning Mr Blewett said that reiterated that there wouldn't be an increase in Medicare levy this term of your Government, however he didn't rule out that one could be announced before the next term should you win re-election. Is that the story at this stage?

PM: It's very close to Budget now and I'm not here to be basically running through things which people comprehend to be Budget matters.

J: The \$12 million for the Indian Pacific, that guarantees the future of an important passenger service?

PM: Well it means we are going to refurbish that service, it will guarantee its future. That refurbishment is going to take place in South Australia, we're putting another \$4 million into Islington on top of the \$3 million which was announced in the 'One Nation' statement which will mean that those workshops can undertake and fulfil that work and so it will be good for South Australia, but as well as that provide a first class passenger service and therefore hopefully growth between Western Australia and the East coast. But of course, AN successfully ran it to date and AN is based in South Australia, it will be a good thing for South Australia.

J: Two key initiatives that you've flagged, you've spoken a lot about today the youth summit and also the infrastructure spending, the two areas which the Bannan Government highlighted long ago and which the Federal Government seems slow to take up. How much ground have you lost by wasting that time?

PM: It's not a matter of wasting time, it's only recently that we proposed that there should be a national training authority and by getting all the States by co-operation and not by confrontation as Dr Hewson would do it, we've got the States into a landmark change. We will now build a vocational education system with TAFE, with technical and further education, which I hope will be as good as any in the world and we'll be able to sit beside our universities as a alternative system of education for many kids that just can't get access to university and it's a good Labor thing to have done. And we've done it as well with non-Labor States which is more to their credit. In terms of infrastructure, it's always been a cry in South Australia to provide a standard gauge railway to Melbourne. I'm happy to say that this Government will be the one to have done it, that I was able to push that proposal through at the right time and as a result will not only build a new track from

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Adelaide to Melbourne but refurbish the line from Melbourne and Sydney and from Sydney to Brisbane so that from Brisbane to Perth via Melbourne and Adelaide we'll have for the first time in 100 years, the first time in a century a standard gauge railway. Thank you.

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