



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON PJ KEATING, MP
DOORSTOP, OUR LADY OF LEBANON SCHOOL, SYDNEY
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PM: I'll just say a couple of things to you, yesterday Dr Hewson said the people of Australia were lazy. In the nine years that I was Treasurer of this country trying to induce structural change and work place reform and what have you, never ever was the willingness of Australians to work ever called into question, that never came to my mind that there was any sense of lack of national energy. I think Dr Hewson owes the public of Australia an apology for a smear that goes across the work force and the business community alike that people are lazy. Australians can do anything that any other nation can do, as they've proved, and I think the great strides of the 1980s and early '90s are evidence of that, and his view that he should offend every group in the community and now the community at large by branding them lazy is I think, unbecoming of him and he owes all of us, and particularly the working men and women of this country, an apology.

J: Do we have to work harder though as a nation?

PM: We've got to organise our investment and our products as we are now, towards the world markets, doing sensible and clever things and what you're seeing here today, that is a secondary school, greater participation for kids, young men, young women, these are the things which will carry us along.

J: Mr Keating on wheat, do you believe we do need as Dr Hewson suggests to up the ante with the United States?

PM: We've made clear our position to the United States administration and we are now going to subject the administration to the rigours of the GATT process, but the notion that abuse or upping the ante so to speak can play any sensible role is of course a nonsense. And not only that, Dr Hewson is already attacking Japan which is our largest trading partner where we have a huge trade surplus and where the trade story to Japan has been one of great success for Australia. So a little bit of moderation in thought and language would help.

J: (inaudible)

PM: Wheat and agricultural trade has been a matter which we've been arguing about now for most of the '80s. I succeeded in getting agriculture onto the GATT agenda in 1986 and it's still being debated, it's coming to the end of the round and that's what will matter most; knocking out subsidies worldwide rather than responding to any one particular increase in subsidies.

J: Is this catastrophic for our wheat farmers sales?

PM: We need to analyse it and see what markets they are likely to be moving into and how that will affect us.

J: Mr Keating, are you or the Labor Party embarrassed about the slanging match between Whitlam and Hawke?

PM: I've got nothing to say about that, I was asked about that this morning.

J: ... are you embarrassed?

PM: We're all grown people in this country, we can all say what we wish.

J: Just getting back to wheat, are you personally disappointed that Mr Bush has done this and do you fear that he may have other surprises up his sleeve in this election year?

PM: I doubt it, but I can understand where it's come from. He was in the mid-West in the wheat belt and he's made this what he thinks is a gesture. I think that the best result here is for the United States to push through a conclusion of the GATT round with the Europeans on agriculture and we see these subsidies diminish. But I notice Dr Hewson talking about the alliance, I don't know whether he thinks we should be dragging defence issues into

this, I think it would be most unfortunate if that were his view. Earlier this year I was in Lae and some of those places in Papua New Guinea where American families left thousands of their boys behind dead on those beaches and all Australians should consider this when we try to link the defence relationship into trade matters. Dr Hewson is very intemperate these days as his remarks on Japan show, as his claim that Australians are lazy shows, as he's attacked renters, teachers, nurses just about every group in the community and I think a little bit of restraint on his part wouldn't go astray.

J: Are you expecting any improvement in the unemployment figures next week?

PM: Wait and see next week. Thank you.

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