



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER THE HON P J KEATING, MP
DOORSTOP HMAS MELBOURNE
29 SEPTEMBER 1992**

E&OE PROOF ONLY

J: Prime Minister there are three days to go in this campaign, have you left the run a bit late to campaign here?

PM: I have been down here earlier, but the thing is the future is about Victoria and I think what you are seeing here today at this dock yard, which I might say the Premier has had a very large interest in, is part of the new manufacturing of Australia. I have just had the Navy tell me that this ship is a no fault ship. That is it has been delivered without faults, it's probably the cleanest new vessel of its type handed over surpassing American built same-class ships which says a lot about manufacturing industry and it is done with cooperation between Government and private business in Australia. It has been built by AMECON, a private company, but it has been done in partnership with the Government, with the trade unions, with the community of Williamstown and the atmosphere in this yard. The pride in this yard is what has produced this ship under time, on budget, and with quality which surpasses anything you could compare it with.

J: Will that translate into votes for the Kirner Government, Mr Keating?

PM: Well the thing is I think it is a matter of whether you take that view of the world, which the Premier takes, or whether you say, look we don't want a ship building yard we will just leave it to the open market, we will let the Americans have this. So you let the market work, absolutely: knock off Williamstown, kick the people out of the ship yard, let the Americans build the ships; that would be the view of the Liberal Party. Now it is not a view we accept and it is the same with motor

cars. As you know, I have been to the Toyota plant in the last week or so in Japan, and with the Premier I had the pleasure of officiating at the opening of the construction phase of this plant, and I think it is the difference between the Labor Party which wants to bring the community with it to do good things for Australia, good things for Victoria, as distinct from a Government and a Party which basically believes in text book capitalism, which went out with straw hats.

J: .. Prime Minister that Mrs Kirner can not win this election?

PM: Well I think with every election you are in there with a chance right to the very end.

J: You don't share the former Prime Minister's view?

PM: No I don't. I think Joan has campaigned like a veteran in this and she has had a hard road to hoe, it is hard governing States or any area of the country at times of economic recession and with a difficult structural change going on as well, but the changes which I think the Premier has been able to make in Victoria have been important in the long run for the public of Victoria and this is not less so than a place like Williamstown.

J: So you believe she has done the hard work necessary to get back in on October 3?

PM: Well she has done the things within her power, that's the thing, and done it to the best of her ability, and with style.

J: Prime Minister what about Arvi Parbo's letter this morning, what's your attitude to that?

PM: Well I think that he is making a point, that's fair enough. But I think probably Sir Arvi would be a little worried if policy changes in his area of industry were about to wipe him out. You see it is all very well saying to the car companies, please be relaxed as the Opposition contemplates working you out, pop your valium tablet, be relaxed as you go to the slaughter yard, I am sure they will take Arvi's advice well, but probably won't accept it.

J: Prime Minister in 1990 you were saying that you were more prone to reductions in tariffs than Senator Button was, and yet now you seem to have changed

PM: No, no our line is totally consistent. That was the high tariffs, 253 per cent for motor vehicles and these things couldn't obtain, the Australian people getting very dear vehicles, the efficiencies of the plants weren't there they had to come down. But they can't come down to the point where they don't exist, it is a matter of finding that nice balance and giving industries time and giving them consistency and see the clear points made by Toyota, in the last week in Japan, is that they will

build and compete and export from Australia with a modest level of tariff, but they can't do it with nothing.

J: Isn't it correct though that Australian manufacturers have had two decades virtually to prepare for reductions in tariffs and their productivity hasn't increased markedly?

PM: They had a slug of a Government that left them the way it left them with these high tariffs. I mean tariffs went up under the Liberals, under the Fraser Government, which Dr Hewson was advising. It needs to be remembered that during the Fraser years tariff protection actually went up, there was no encouragement from a coalition Government to improve the efficiency of Australia and as usual it has always got to be done by us. But again what we do is the thoughtful balanced thing, not the unthoughtful ideological thing.

J: Premier, can I just ask you, would you have liked to have seen more of Mr Keating in this campaign?

JK: I always enjoy working with Mr Keating but his visit to Japan was very important because what it did was illustrate the difference between ourselves and the Opposition, and showed quite clearly that if you want a Government that is committed to the future of manufacturing industry and partnerships with unions and the private sector then you vote for a Keating Government or later you vote for a Keating Government. You do not risk the recovery that is coming with Kennett economics or Hewson economics.

J: ... is there a liability to him or vice versa?

JK: Well I don't think that is our view, is it?

PM: I don't think that, in fact with a very difficult brief Joan has coped with it, not only as valiantly as any leader could, but with a confidence which I think has made life much better in terms of attitudes in Victoria than would have necessarily obtained.

J: Will Labor's performance here determine when you go federally?

PM: We have got plenty of time to work that out. State elections are State elections in the end, mostly they are fought on State issues, we will make our judgements about things, I think that in this country the public expects to get value from the Parliaments and they expect them to run their course.

J: Is there a chance that you will go before Christmas?

PM: Ask silly questions and you get silly answers.

J: Premier would it surprise you to hear that in one recent poll apparently the gap between Labor and the Coalition narrowed to 7.5 per cent?

JK: No it would not in certain seats. But really the poll that counts is on election day and I think there is a lot of change taking place, when you get, though I don't think channel 9 or 7 covered it really well yesterday, the Oppositions spokesperson on the audit group, that is Mr Des Moore, saying he is going to take 25 000 jobs out of the public sector people realise that there will be no fun or future in a Kennett run economy.

J: ... what your own polling says the gap is?

JK: No I don't talk about polling at this interviews, you know that. But the real poll that matters is Saturday.

PM: There's one thing for sure there will be 25 000 public servants at least voting for Mrs Kirner, they're the 25 000 that face the chop under Mr Moore. I have had Mr Moore, he has worked for me, you see he worked for me, so I know all about Mr Moore and I know all about the 25 000.

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