



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING
DOORSTOP, DARLING HARBOUR CONVENTION CENTRE, SYDNEY
25 JANUARY 1992 3**

E&OE PROOF COPY

J: The polls are good for you, Prime Minister.

PM: Polls come every week almost, in Australia.

J: Mr Keating, Dr Hewson has talked about your credibility on social justice issues. He said that you don't have any.

PM: That's about as believable ... when you have a Liberal leader saying, a Liberal leader who wants to smash Medicare, who wants to take \$10 billion out of outlays, and mostly social outlays, who was happy to see three kids in ten complete secondary school in the early 1980s, who believes that if we help the poor we drag the rest of us down, for somebody sharing those views to say of a Labor Government with an unparalleled record in social reform that we don't have a notion of social justice, barely warrants a response.

J: There are a million people out of work and we've got a \$150 billion foreign debt bill.

PM: But what we have is one of the finest social wage and safety nets in the world, the one thing that Dr Hewson is dedicated to tearing down. One of the reasons why this society is as cohesive as it is, even through stress times, is that the Government has in place a social security system which can equal anything in the world. It is that system which Dr Hewson wants to put upon a frontal attack.

J: How close are you to making a decision about the election date?

PM: I get asked about that every day, don't I?

J: ... minimising his tax, Dr Hewson's minimisation?

PM: I saw that today. I only know what I've read, and if what we've read is true it's for Dr Hewson to say what he has done in these respects. But if it is true, he does seem to have a penchant for 15 per cent tax rates, does he not?

J: ... Hewson's assessment that official reserves are run down?

PM: Are you from Knight Ridder or something are you? Good bye.

ends