



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON
P. J. KEATING, M.P.
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS MEETING - HOBART
FRIDAY 25 FEBRUARY, 1994**

PM: The Commonwealth, myself and my colleagues the Treasurer and Deputy Prime Minister, met with Premiers and Ministers over lunch and while there were varying opinions we did manage, in a cooperative way to get an agreement on adopting the general principles of the Hilmer Report on competition policy; on authorising work to be undertaken jointly between us on legislation, between now and the next COAG meeting which will include in the broad the Hilmer Report on competition policy applying to all sectors of the economy and all levels of government.

So, I'm just about to give to Premiers the collated result of that session and that will be incorporated in the communique. So, it was a productive lunch, one which will advance the whole process of competition policy reform over the next months to August, but, more particularly, one which will advance competition policy making the whole economy more competitive including, and particularly, government business enterprises.

J: What about their demands about industrial relations reform?

PM: Well, this was not... whatever discussion there is to be on that it was not part and parcel of this result and this was one of the core matters of this COAG meeting - in fact the core matter of this COAG meeting - and I'm pleased to say we've had a very cooperative discussion.

J: Prime Minister, are you prepared to change the industrial relations legislation in any way?

PM: Well, we're about to go in and discuss now the other elements on the agenda - water, electricity reform and all these other things. Industrial relations is just one of those agenda items. The key message here is that the Hilmer discussion has been encapsulated around itself only and not party to other...

J: So, IR legislation is on the table?

PM: No, look, ask me about the IR legislation at the end of the day.

J: What about the audit that the states wanted?

PM: Well, that is the states understanding, themselves, what these competitive changes mean in terms of costs for their own government business enterprises. Well, that's fine, all governments should know that.

Ends.