



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING MP
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J: Prime Minister, what sort of indication can Australia ...

PM: Well, the White Paper which I will be introducing for the Government this week is one of the biggest things the Government will have undertaken in ten, going on eleven years. I might say it will do as I said we would do on election eve and that is not forget the unemployed; that is leave an arm out to pull them up with the rest of us so the recovery will be capable of being enjoyed by all Australians. Its principal features will be a commitment to the long-term unemployed, but it has many facets and another will be a commitment to the young people of Australia; a guarantee that they are trained for work and that the years of 15-19 are regarded as a period of vocational preparation. Other features will be an involvement, a capacity for greater involvement of the regions of this country in the national economy and further reforms to industry policy which will carry the reforms of the past decade even further.

The White Paper is something that our opponents could neither conceive of nor deliver and it will paint very starkly the difference in social and economic policy of the government and its comprehension and the paucity of ideas and views on the conservative side of Australian politics.

J: Will next weeks Budget contain any further incentives?

PM: The Budget will consolidate the White Paper and will contain other changes, but they will be changes not related to the principal things the White Paper is focussed upon.

J: What form will your commitment to long-term unemployed take?

- PM: You will have to wait for them I think, but as you know we have had a green paper which we commissioned after the election - that has reported. We then had consultations on the Green Paper, we've taken notice of those consultations; there has been a huge investment of ministerial work in this statement. As I say, it is one of the biggest things that we have done and I am quite sure you would be flat out finding the government of any other developed economy committing the ministerial and bureaucratic time that this has taken to produce.
- J: Do you think business will welcome it, that they will be happy with it?
- PM: We are not going to have the complement to the labour market from migration that we had in the last cycle. We cut the immigration intake a few years ago and as companies see their markets pick up as is the case here at this plant - General Motors - as companies start to grow and rehire labour they'll want to find a source of skilled and trained labour. We believe the best place that can come is from the pool of unemployed and particularly the pool of those long-term unemployed.
- J: What's your response to an internal DEET survey that is critical of labour market programs?
- PM: Well, this is a complete overhaul of labour market programs and will have a completely new framework for the delivery of labour market programs in the White Paper.
- J: So, is it possible this Budget and this statement together could be a good precursor to go to the polls early?
- PM: No ... the Liberals, they are that spooked these days. I mean, today's polls again show the Government would clearly win an election - except the Saulwick poll, but I contend that is mostly wrong. But, if you go to the Newspoll, Morgan, all the others, the Government is clearly in a strong position and it is simply because it has got the energy and the ideas. If there's one word will emerge or one observation will emerge from the reading of the White Paper document it will be energy. The enormous energy which the Government has committed to this task. And that is why I believe that in recognition of that the energy and commitment and inclusiveness which the Government brings to the job of Government and policy making, I believe the Government is doing well in the polls. But that doesn't mean to say because we've got the drop on the Coalition that this is the time to leave off the tiller of Government. This is a time to push the changes home.
- J: Do you care to make a comment on Ayrton Senna's death today?
- PM: I didn't know about it, I've only just found out. I find that very sad because I think this fellow was a great champion. One of the great drivers of the post-War years, but of course participating in a very

dangerous sport. I think everybody who is in it understands that, but a champion is a champion and all of us are saddened when we see them go.

J: ... (inaudible)

PM: That was the different times for post-War reconstruction. This is for the changes to an externally orientated economy that Ben Chifley wouldn't have conceived of in those years. That is, the level of sophistication in the Australian economy today as evidenced by what's happening here at General Motors and the paper which reflects the kind of economy and society we have, has the degree of sophistication, I think, Ben Chifley would have been very proud of had he been in a position of reading this White Paper.

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