



# PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING MP  
DOORSTOP, SALVATION ARMY CENTRE, MELBOURNE,  
FRIDAY, 27 MAY 1994**

## **E&OE PROOF COPY**

PM: Let me just say a couple of things about the Salvation Army and what you've just seen here. These are the sorts of things which Australia needs to do to encourage those who have missed out in society and missed out in the work force, who are untrained or who are homeless and how the White Paper which the Government introduced two weeks ago can help to see people case managed, trained, placed in a job and where, as a society, we pick them up and we don't just forget them as the rest of us move on into the recovery of the 1990s. So, the Salvation Army as a voluntary organisation will be a case management agency and one of the challenges to the Government now is to build the administrative system to deliver all the White Paper policies. And it will be with organisations like the Salvation Army that this will happen and the sort of co-operative, interested work which you are seeing here where there is not the rigidities of the work place that a lot of the benefits of self esteem and experience, these are the things which, I think, the long term unemployed, the homeless ... because the thing you've got to remember about a lot of people who are homeless, particularly kids, you've got to be awfully street smart to survive. They're mostly very intelligent and it is a matter of focussing their intelligence into things which they can do and this is what this is about.

So, I'm looking forward to seeing a change in the next couple of years in the way in which we introduce the White Paper, apply the White Paper to the problems of the unemployed in this country. And, what I've seen today, here, is a tremendous example of the innovation which the Salvation Army has been able to bring to helping homeless kids, people who have been institutionalised get experience, get their self esteem up, make products that actually sell and run as a business. Of course, it has grown here by about 300 per cent, the turnover here, in the last year or two.

- J: Prime Minister, on issues like this where you are relying on voluntary agencies like the Salvation Army to do so much, they are finding their funding base increasingly difficult - the Red Shield Appeal was down for instance - what happens when these agencies can't meet the need that is confronting them?
- PM: We will be paying case managers on a fee basis. We have set up an organisation to actually operate the case management business as a market. This organisation called ESRA which will see the development of a case management agency in competition with the CES. So, we will actually be paying a fee, we won't be simply saying to organisations like the Salvation Army, you cover the industry cost of it. In other words, it will be in the interest of voluntary agencies to actually take up the White Paper proposal.
- J: Mr Keating, are you impressed so far by the performance of the Opposition's new frontbench?
- PM: I must say I thought if Mr Downer is starting to say that he is going to show some strength, he could start by dismissing Senator Bishop from the position of Shadow Health Minister. I mean, for somebody trying now to run an argument which was won in this country 20 years ago, that there are very clear links between smoking and health, smoking and cancer, I should have thought there are some things where people get things wrong, and in the tolerance of public life you can say well, that's one they got wrong, but ok, then move on. But, you don't get a thing like this wrong. This is just plain negligence, incredible negligence and a terrible arrogance speaking to buttress the interests of cigarette companies against the common good of the community. I think, Mr Downer ought to say, look I'm sorry about this Bronwyn, this is going to hurt me as much as it is going to hurt you, but out you go.
- J: Mr Downer said though, he is not going to do anything you tell him and that actually you are engaging in 1930 style class war rhetoric in your attacks on him.
- PM: I know, and don't the media run some of that simple simon stuff. Look, I made two points which he says are class war tactics. They are not at all. One is, I repeated what Dr Hewson said - that Mr Downer's leadership was decided by an exclusive group of the Victorian Liberal party - that is simply just a point of fact. The second point I made is I don't believe that any leader of a major party today, in 1994, ought to belong to clubs that exclude women. I mean, what sort of society would we be if the policy behind that kind of intolerance were to be applied generally in the community. I noticed Mr Downer has run around saying I've never been to a club and everything like this, look, the fact is the club I belong to and I've gone into thousands of times in my life, a club that must be burnt into the Liberal party's memory where I accepted victory on election night - the Bankstown Sports Club in Sydney - 25,000 members, men and women who participate freely and

enjoy each others company. But, the notion there is some sort of basis of superiority and a basis of privilege, wherein a club or its membership say to women you can't be involved here is something that the Downer's didn't tolerate.

J: ... (inaudible) ...

PM: Just understand this, don't let Mr Downer pass this off as some class matter. This has got nothing to do with class, it is simply to do with social comment. It is a matter of a social point to be made and the social point is that women should not be excluded from institutions in our country, least of all, of course, clubs.

J: ... in parliament?

PM: I've been in public life for 25 years and I've faced them all.

J: Do you think the new Opposition front bench is looking a bit tougher than the front bench you've had to face in the past?

PM: Well, are we talking about toughness or crassness? Because if barracking for cigarette companies against the interests of young Australians, who are basically who they are trying to hook into the habit of smoking, if that's tough, well, that's not the sort of toughness Australian politics needs. I would have thought, also, the appointment of Mr McLachlan as the environment spokesman, just laughs at every person that has a serious interest in the environment. So, there are a lot of, I think, poorly placed people here. But I noticed Dr Hewson said that he was making it very clear that he thought there was a lot of preference here, they were very pointed comments by Dr Hewson. Yesterday he said well, a lot of people who supported Mr Downer have been rewarded here and then he went on to say some other things, but he made the point that he didn't think it was appropriate. It is not going to be an entirely happy little gathering.

J: ... (inaudible) and right across Mr Downer's agenda ... (inaudible ...

PM: Yes, you see that's what Dr Hewson did say. He's expecting to speak across the agenda and he's there basically to ... you see Mr Downer is trying to say we're going to run a broad inclusive kind of policy which, by the way, doesn't include women in particular places, but an inclusive policy while all the dries in the economic area sit in the key economic jobs and they're saying Fightback, which they committed themselves to absolutely including Mr Downer, who is now trying to reform himself as a dry .. you see, you've got this terrible dichotomy ... Malcolm Fraser has made his leadership by recruiting Mr Staley and all of them in Melbourne getting him up. Malcolm has never been happier than the last week. This is Malcolm's best week since 1983. He is as happy as a sand boy, he's got Mr Downer up, he can't stop smiling, he's writing columns, he's on radio stations, he's doing press

comment, he's in seventh heaven. Now, the Fraser government was the blancmange government of the post-war years. The government that did nothing. So, Mr Downer is going to be the leader of a government like Mr Fraser, but he's got all the hard edged economic guys in the economic jobs who believe in Fightback. So, Fightback has been on the scrap metal heap, but will soon be seeing all the tin men of Fightback crawling out of the heap, coming back. Because that's basically all the Liberals believe in. They believe in the hard edged economic things of Fightback as their leader is now trying to put another complexion on the hard edged philosophy of Fightback. Now, remember this, the hard things about Fightback were not simply the consumption tax, but the \$10,000 million cuts to government spending that would affect the whole social welfare system and organisations of the kind we've seen today. All that is still there. Mr Downer told us that a week ago in the Budget reply, that he is going to basically base his changes on cuts to government spending. He calls it efficiencies in government. Read: efficiencies for cutting into the social wage.

So, just understand the contradictions here. You've got Mr Downer seeking to emulate Mr Fraser in, if you like, the broad rhetoric, but the non-reformist policies of the Fraser years coupled with all the hard edged people put into the economic jobs who are all inherent to Fightback. Now, you know what that means for the rest of you - I can tell you - fun and games. Fun and games as this dichotomy emerges over time. They have to be one thing or the other.

J: ... (inaudible) ... Downer a formidable opponent, what do you think about that?

PM: Well, why should I take any notice of that. Paul (Kelly) also thought they were going to win the last election.

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