



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP
DOORSTOP, ALP HEADQUARTERS, CANBERRA, 2 SEPTEMBER 1994**

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J: Prime Minister, do you think that today's Saulwick poll confirms that Alexander Downer is finished?

PM: Well, the problem is the Liberal Party. I mean, I said this at the time he was elected - they changed the jockey but not the horse. The problem here is the horse. The Liberal Party is institutionally past it. It has no structure. Look, here they are trying to cobble together a policy statement. They don't know where they are going. They have no structure, they don't know where they think Australia should be, how society has changed and how it should be managed. So, whether it's Alexander Downer or John Hewson or John Howard or Costello or whoever, it doesn't matter. The Liberal Party has got to go back and do all the hard things that Parties have got to do to decide how to manage their affairs and how to construct policy. That's their problem. And this is just another manifestation of the same problem.

J: Do you think Alexander Downer will be able...he's dropped 30 points in the last month....

PM: Well, look, polls come and go. I wouldn't put all the store in the polls. And I never do. But it's the straws in the wind that matter. No policy on Mabo, the Native Land...Native Title Act, the Northern Territory Land Rights Act - it doesn't matter where it is, there is you know, no obvious policy. And that's what the public is picking up. They're picking up the vibrations of a party leader who is out of his depth. But the reason he's out of his depth is because the Party is out of its depth. There is only one party of government in Australia at the moment, and it's the Labor Party.

J: Would you be happy to see Carmen Lawrence as your Deputy Prime Minister next March?