



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP
SPEECH, CAMPAIGN LAUNCH FOR THE HON MARY CRAWFORD MP,
WINDAROO COUNTRY CLUB, BEENLEIGH, QUEENSLAND
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EXTRACT - REPUBLIC/IDENTITY

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Now, this election coming up is going to be about what sort of country we are, what we have become and where we want to be. And you know what the Government has been doing now for ten years - opening Australia up, we have been seeking to - looking for - these things, opportunities and equity at home and enterprise abroad. And we're now going out to the world as we have perhaps never done before, but not only are we going out there, we're actually putting into place the structures that will receive us. When I came back from Osaka a couple of weeks ago, Australia was a part of - by the adoption of that Action Plan - the largest free-trade agreement in the world, and will be an integrated part of the largest whole of any economic organisation in the world. We are now an integrated member, and we will be when we get our action plans adopted next year, of a body which is responsible for the production of 63% of the world's GDP and half the world's population. So, it's larger than any other body - the European Union, or NAFTA or any other economic grouping. And we're not just sitting on the outside looking at it, we are an integral part of it. And that's been done by a Labor Government that had the vision and the wit, and the belief that not only were we good enough to be in it and to participate in to, but we were open, stripped down, competitive and ready to be in it, and we have then put the organisation together so Australia has that sort of place in the world.

Now, these sorts of changes - and going out there as a community proud of what its done, proud of itself, clear about who it is, strong about its culture - it's why I believe that in the end, we can't approach the community around us, or be an integral part of it as we would like to be, by saying here we are - a unique country, proudly Australian, but by the way, our head of state is the Monarch of Great Britain. It might have worked for us in the past, it won't work for us any more. It's why the change to an Australian republic is not

simply an important thing for our identity and our culture, an affirmation of what it is to be an Australian, but rather - as well - that it's going to be part of better economic integration of Australia in the Asia Pacific, as a consequence of this. And I don't have any time for John Howard's view - he says "oh, I'm a traditionalist, I believe in the Monarchy". What he is saying is no Australian is good enough or smart enough to be our head of state. That's what it really means - down in a nutshell, what it really means is that he believes someone with a hereditary title can be and should be head of Australia, our head of state, can best perform the responsibilities of head of state, rather than any one of us. Any one of us. And that's a terrible indictment I think on a country such as this.

An indictment of a view that I believe he has on a country with such promise, and such vitality, and such individuality as Australia has. So, it's going to be about these things - about who has faith in Australians, and who believes in us as a society. Who will back Australians in. Who knows they can do all the smart things that any other country can do, and has the confidence to let them go and do it, and build the structures within which they can do it. These are the things that I think Australia needs now, and not a trip down the time tunnel of some derivative society that believes that - as he said in his foreign policy speech - we have let the US Alliance go. As if the United States Government wants another mendicant state turning up saying oh, will you please protect us? What they want are allies that can stand on their feet and make structures that actually help them, as well as ourselves, in the management of world issues, world trade issues etc. And that's the sort of ally I believe Bill Clinton wants - not someone with their hand out looking for some gifts...strategic client status - some gifting from the United States. And that's why, again, it gets back to whether you have faith in yourselves, ourselves, to relate to the old societies around us, to find our place in the world, to feel comfortable here, and to become part of the community of nations here. Or whether we say, look, we want security from Asia, rather than security in Asia, because that's John Howard's message - he wants security from Asia, not security in Asia. The Government is after security in Asia, he wants security from Asia. And when he said in his speech that defence capabilities and defence collaboration and all of these things, good though they may be, present at once an opportunity, but on the other hand, an issue of conflict. That is, whether it will actually help us protect ourselves. In other words, our friends in Asia might be our enemies in Asia, and we should be wary of them, and that's why we need to keep our bet covered by this sort of unreconstructed, if you like, alliance with the United States.

Now, that's not the way we will prosper. We will prosper in this country with security in Asia, not from Asia, because 18 million of us occupying this huge continent, but holding it in fear of the neighbourhood around us is, I think, for us untenable. But that's essentially his view. Now, he's doing a statement on Wednesday about what he calls identity and these things. But all of it will be covering his tracks, about what he really thinks. He says "I'll give you a republic, too - but at that referendum, I will actually be voting for the Monarchy". Now, to get a republic referendum through, you have got to get a majority of electors in a majority of States, and if the Government isn't going

flat out for it - absolutely flat out for it - there is no chance of it succeeding. Imagine what chance you would win with the Prime Minister running around saying "well, we have got a republic referendum on, but actually, I'm in favour of the Monarchy". Now, this is his proposal. You see, because basically, his whole world started at Whitehall, and finishes at Pennsylvania Avenue.

That's his view of the world, and the fact that we are here is just a sort of inconvenience - you know, likes the country, but doesn't like the location. Likes the house, but doesn't like the neighbourhood. And I just can't see how there is any profit in Australians supporting that sort of view. And the other things, I think, are going to be important too. And that is, the things that underpin our society, like a decent social safety net, or Medicare, or a fair industrial relations system, or superannuation. He's saying now - after saying for years Medicare, we are going to rip it up, we're going to go back to before Medibank, bulk billing is a tort, and we are going to make deep cuts in Government expenditure, and talking about a structural surplus in their first year, which implies cuts of \$9-10 billion, he's now saying 'oh, no - I don't believe any of that any more'. He now says he is in favour of Medicare, of a decent social safety net, fair industrial relations. Well, as I have said to other audiences - don't believe him. He doesn't mean it. What he means, is what he said for so long. And when he goes around the country saying "people know what I stand for - I have been around for a long time in public life, they know what my values are, they know what I stand for". Yes - they know what he stands for - ripping Medicare up, pulling the social wage apart, running on a contract basis with no protection - no Award protection's - in the industrial arena. These are the things which he believes in, and also cutting back Government spending in important services.

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