

9



PRIME MINISTER

24 May 1996

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER
THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP
DOORSTOP INTERVIEW - ACROSS ADDRESS, SYDNEY**

E&OE.....

JOURNALIST:

... (inaudible)...

PRIME MINISTER:

Just calmly accept this. We went to the last election saying there would be no GST. That means what I said it means. There will be no GST. We have no plans to introduce one. It is completely off the agenda.

JOURNALIST:

Have your Cabinet Ministers been telling business to go softly on the issue of the GST because it is not good to put the kybosh on any plans in the future after the next election?

PRIME MINISTER:

I haven't the faintest idea what all of my colleagues say in discussions they've had, but I can tell the Australian public that we went to the last election saying that the GST was not part of our policy for this Government and that remains the position and I can't really say any more. There is nothing more to say. The Australian people voted against a GST in 1993 and that is why it was dropped out of our policy. We accepted the verdict of the Australian people. Now, I can't add anything to that. I mean, it is just ridiculous - people keep going around and around in circles. I can't stop a business organisation advocating a course of action. It's a free nation and debate of that kind is part and parcel of public life, but the Howard Government has no plans to

introduce a GST. It is not part of our policy. We were elected on a platform that did not include a GST and I don't intend to depart from that. I gave a lot of commitments before the last election. I gave them deliberately and carefully and seriously and I place an enormous amount of store on the trust between the public and their elected representatives and you will find as the months go by that keeping faith with the Australian people will be the distinguishing characteristic of the Howard Government.

Thank you.