



# PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
THE HON JOHN HOWARD, MP  
DOORSTOP INTERVIEW  
SALE, VICTORIA**

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PRIME MINISTER:

Inaudible.... by my good friend Mr Peter McGauran the local Member and it is a great regional area of not only Victoria but Australia. And it gave me an opportunity to get a representative expression of opinion from people who are unhappy with the Government's position. Though it seemed the right place to come to in Victoria to talk directly and openly to people who have concerns about the Government's decisions.

JOURNALIST:

It was a very vocal body of people there today. What was the feeling up there on the stage?

PRIME MINISTER:

I have been to a lot of meetings in my long political career and this is democracy at work. It was a perfectly civil meeting. It was noisy, people felt strongly but that's their right as Australians. It's my job to come and explain myself and put my point of view and to tell people why the Government is taking a decision which will cause a lot of inconvenience and a deal of unhappiness for a lot of people who have enjoyed recreational shooting. Now I understand that, I'm sorry that that's happened but those people have a perfect right to put their point of view, noisily if necessary - that's Australia.

JOURNALIST:

They say they're going to demonstrate their feelings at the ballot box at the next election. Does that concern you?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, in the end in politics you have got to take a stand on things like this and if my judgement of what is right in the interests of the Australian people is demonstrated to be wrong at the next election well so be it. That is the democratic process. They have a right to do that because in a democracy if you're unhappy with what the Government's done you have a right to organise against it. Mind you the stance the Government has taken is supported by the Labor Party as well and by most people in the National Party and in the Liberal Party. So maybe you will get another force, I don't know, that's a matter for them. But that's democracy, I don't fear that. I don't fear the verdict of the Australian people ever. Now my judgement is that they want tough gun laws. I'm sorry that that has offended some people and I respect their different point of view but in the end you have got to stick to your guns.

**JOURNALIST:**

You've been in talking to four groups in here today. Have you come away with any different ideas?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Oh No. It just reinforces my view that there are a lot of people out there who are totally decent law abiding Australians who happen to feel very strongly that we're wrong. Now I think we've agreed to disagree but I don't have a diminished view of them as responsible Australians - certainly not. It was a perfectly civil meeting with four people who just were very unhappy with the Government's position. Now that happens all the time.

**JOURNALIST:**

They've been talking to you about things like shortening magazines and things like that though. Are you taking those on board?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

My position is that anything that weakens or is reasonably construed as weakening the Police Ministers' Resolution I can't support.

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