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**PRIME MINISTER**

22

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**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
THE HON. JOHN HOWARD MP  
DOORSTOP INTERVIEW - SOUTHERN CROSS CLUB, PHILLIP**

**E & OE.....**

**JRNLS:**

Prime Minister Kim Beazley tonight is describing the Budget as the first chapter in a new story of an unfair Australia. What's your response to that?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

A litany of negatives is no substitute for an alternative economic plan. There was not one positive word, not one positive thought, not one alternative idea. I say to Mr Beazley don't imagine you can rely on negatives. The Australian public is fed up with that. You've got to present an alternative and you didn't tonight.

**JRNLS:**

He has confirmed however that the Opposition at least will in the Senate be blocking, moving to block things like the increased HECS charges and the nursing home fees. Is that of concern to the Government?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It ought to be of concern to the Opposition because the Labor Party introduced HECS and our nursing home changes are exactly the same as the hostel changes introduced by the Labor Government in 1988. So it's an exercise in hypocrisy for the Labor Party to oppose either of those measures.

**JRNLS:**

How much damage can the Senate do to the Budget?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

It's not a question of damaging the budget. It's damaging the future of Australia. The best outcome for Australia is the quick passage of the whole of the budget. That is more likely than any other result to deliver lower interest rates and every time you hack away at a budget, you're hacking away at the lower interest rate future that Australia could have.

**JRNLS:**

How quickly could Australians be enjoying the possibility of lower interest rates as a result of the budget?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

The possibility of them as soon as the budget is passed. When that possibility becomes a reality depends on a number of things over which we don't have control. There's no doubt in the world that if this budget goes through unimpaired, quickly, that more than any other outcome is likely to produce lower interest rates. Thank you.

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