



# PRIME MINISTER

10 November 1996

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
THE HON. JOHN HOWARD MP  
DOORSTOP INTERVIEW - BENALL BOTANIC GARDENS**

E&OE .....

**JOURNALIST:**

...(inaudible)...a review of a consumption tax ...(inaudible)... what's the policy on that?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I haven't seen it, but there won't a GST in this Parliament, I said that and there's been no change.

**JOURNALIST:**

...(inaudible)...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I've only just got there. You ask me about the next Parliament when we're coming towards it. Heaven's above, I'm only just settling in.

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister, what's your reaction to the detention of Australians in Malaysia ...(inaudible)...?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well it's a very unfortunate incident because I understand the desire of people to talk and debate about it, debate these things. But they were told very clearly that the meeting had been prohibited. And the rules of the road are that when you're overseas you've got to do what other countries want you to do, just as when people come here we get them to do what we want. I nonetheless am sorry that it's happened and I've spoken, my office has been in touch with the High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur and

every effort is being made to be in touch with the Australians and to be satisfied that they're being properly treated and we are satisfied that they are being properly treated. I understand they're going to be deported for a breach of the immigration regulations with Malaysia. But they are not, given they're - consistent with the fact that they're in detention - they're not being poorly treated and we'll keep an eye on that situation.

**JOURNALIST:**

Do you think that their actions were justified there?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well we run our country in our way and other countries run their countries in their ways and the trick of, sort of, negotiating our way through a good relationship with the countries of our region is to recognise that we each have different attitudes to different things. I will fiercely defend the values and the attitudes and the practices of Australia, but we have to accept that other countries do things differently and whilst we may not agree with the way things are done there we have to respect their right to do it and when you're in another country if are told that something is not permitted well you'll have to take notice of that or expect certain consequences. That doesn't mean to say that we agree or necessarily sanction what's happened but we have to respect the right of other countries to conduct their affairs in the way they think fit.

**JOURNALIST:**

...(inaudible)...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well look I think it's an unfortunate incident but I'm not going to take it beyond that.

**JOURNALIST:**

...(inaudible)...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

He was(Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop), as I said today, somebody who, I think, in the dreams of many of us we'd like to be. He had it all.

**JOURNALIST:**

...(inaudible)...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

You know I don't talk about backbench members. Look, that's a ridiculously hypothetical question. He has, some years ago, gone to his maker so I don't think you

ought to try and retrospectively drag him in to local political debates. I think that is, if I may say so, it's slightly dishonouring his memory.

**JOURNALIST:**

...(inaudible)...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I think the real lesson of "Weary" Dunlop is that instead of in hatred turning his faith against engagement between Australia and the nations of Asia he encouraged us to do the opposite and that was one of his great far sighted legacies. He encouraged links between Australia and Asia, he encouraged us to remember the past but not allow it to contaminate the present or the future and that really is a lesson for all of us. We should never forget what happened, and we should never try and re-write history, we should never try and say that we weren't enemies at one time as a country with our ...(inaudible)... than any other country. We've always got to be prepared to face the truth about the past that he, always remembering the past, told us to build for the future and I think that's a wonderful ...(inaudible)... and a wonderful example.

**JOURNALIST:**

...(inaudible)...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I don't think he had a racist bone in his body and I think in that way he epitomised the values of most Australians.

**JOURNALIST:**

...(inaudible)...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Small business. The hope of the ...(inaudible)..., so far as country towns are concerned, is a revitalisation of small business. If you can get small business really turning over, really investing, really taking risks then these other things would be seen in the fullness of time as minor interruptions if you can get small business going again that will transform the outlook for country towns. That is why my Government has placed such an enormous emphasis on fixing unfair dismissal laws, cleaning up industrial relations, getting rid of red tape, giving provisional tax relief, giving capital gains tax roll over relief. All the things I said in the election campaign I'd do for small business I'm doing, and if that really flows through then I think you will see that ride over many of the temporary difficulties involving the things of which you've spoken.

**JOURNALIST:**

How can you encourage people to move from the cities to country areas, to country towns?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

The first thing is to stop them leaving the country towns in the first place and the way you do that is to give them job opportunities and that's through small business, particularly for the young.

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