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**PRIME MINISTER**

26 November 1996

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP  
DOORSTOP UPON ARRIVAL FROM APEC - FAIRBAIRN**

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**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister are you buoyed by Dr Mahathir's comments that Pauline Hanson is a person of no consequence?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, I didn't know he'd said that but you know my views on that general subject. I had a very successful meeting. I very much welcome the discussions I had with Dr Mahathir, with the President of China and many other regional leaders. It was a good meeting from Australia's point of view because the process of trade liberalisation which will, if implemented by everybody, generate thousands of jobs for Australians will go on.

**JOURNALIST:**

Are you disappointed Dr Mahathir made those comments when he didn't actually raise the issue with you in his talks?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Look, I'm simply not going to comment on that. You know my view on those things generally and I'm just simply not going to respond to that.

**JOURNALIST:**

So what's the big boost from the APEC meeting for Australia?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, the good news out of the meeting is that the process of trade liberalisation involving everyone, I mean that's important, goes on. And there are thousands of jobs in this exercise for Australians. That's why we are in it. We are not in it because of commitment to some nebulous economic theory. We are in it because this is the fastest growing economic region of the world and if the goals can be worked towards and achieved then there will be tens of thousands of more jobs created not only in Australia but throughout the region and that's very good news for the poorer countries of the region, all of which have very young populations, very high levels of unemployment and the need to lift their economies. And what encouraged me greatly was the commitment of the United States and Japan, the two most powerful economies not only in the region but in the world, to the process, and it is something that Australia should be very much part of and something which it will be part of under this Government as it was under the former Government.

**JOURNALIST:**

Your trip to Beijing next year, will that further cement your relations with China?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

We have good relations with China. There were some misunderstandings. They in my view have been substantially cleared away. The Chinese President at the end of our discussion in English said to me "face to face it is much better - we clear up things", and I don't approach China in any courting sense, but just in a sense of having a sensible mutually beneficial relationship with the most populist country in the world and a country incidentally that invests more in Australia than any other country other than Hong Kong, of course in a few months time Hong Kong will be part of China.

**JOURNALIST:**

Pauline Hanson has raised concerns about some aspects of the action plan relating to foreign investment in real estate. She says Australians are in danger of becoming tenants in their own country. Is that a valid concern?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No, see you later.