



Handwritten initials 'JG' in a circle

PRIME MINISTER

15 February 1997

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER
THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP
DOORSTOP - FAIRBAIRN**

E & OE.....

PRIME MINISTER:

Good morning.

JRNLS:

What do you want to get out of your first overseas trip this year?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, a reconfirmation of the very close friendship and historical association with New Zealand.

JRNLS:

On the White Paper how do you hope to put the Coalition stamp on the White Paper? It's been reported that you are expecting to take a hard-nosed approach to it.

PRIME MINISTER:

I don't think a running commentary on a White Paper is suitable for a noise laden doorstep at the airport.

JRNLS:

There were some rocky times in the relationship between the previous government and New Zealand. Do you think that under your government that's been repaired and we have resumed a close relationship with New Zealand?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well the people have always been close. Government's can never wreck good relationships between close friends but under my government the relationship has got I think a little warmer because I have a good personal relationship with Mr Bolger, we have a lot in common and I will be furthering that over the next two or three days.

JRNLST:

Prime Minister how would you describe your WIK negotiations yesterday?

PRIME MINISTER:

They were quite friendly. They were very detailed, they highlighted the complexity of the issue. I don't want to raise expectations that we have bridged the differences because they are still very great. But there was a lot of good will. Everybody was trying and I'm going to keep trying to get a negotiated settlement but at the end of the day as the government we have to take a decision

JRNLST:

What do you hope to have achieved and by when?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I've indicated that I would like to put a final position to my colleagues by Easter and that seems to be a timetable that all the interested parties both accept and understand. Thank you.

ends