



13 March 1997

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

E & OE .....

**JOURNALIST:**

Prime Minister looking at your political family you would have heard the comments Mr Kennett made about real jobs and 'work for the dole' not necessarily being related - what's your response?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well I haven't seen those comments. But I've been told that he's proposing some parallel thing that would involve the private sector. I'm prepared to look at positively at any positive proposals in this area. My understanding is that he's quite supportive of the 'work for the dole' proposition but he's got some additional ideas. Now I welcome additional ideas from any Premier which will help us tackle this very difficult problem and a problem that's going to take a long time to solve.

**JOURNALIST:**

(Inaudible)...he seems to be suggesting a breakaway (inaudible) Commonwealth scheme. Was that part of the problem (inaudible)...?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Oh look, there's no question of any breakaway by anybody. The Commonwealth has nationwide responsibility for matters relating to unemployment benefits. They are Commonwealth benefits, they're not State benefits and the question of a breakaway State scheme simply doesn't come in to it. But if he's got some additional proposals to help tackle the problem I'm delighted to look at it and I welcome it. And I know his very strong commitment to reducing unemployment in Australia but we have responsibility for unemployment benefits and there's no such thing as a breakaway State unemployment benefit scheme, that's just not possible.

**JOURNALIST:**

Well would it be possible to have a (inaudible) Victoria trying a different scheme in conjunction with the...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Look, it is possible to tackle this matter on many fronts and I'm quite certain that the Victorian Premier wants to work cooperatively with the Federal Government.

**JOURNALIST:**

Have you seen the latest jobless figures which are due out today?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

They're not out yet. The figures are coming out at 11.30am.

**JOURNALIST:**

Just on reducing unemployment overall you've said we need growth at more than 4%. Now, the projections are for around 3.5%. What can be done in the course of this Government to try to get 4% growth?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well there are a number of things we've already done which, over time, ought to lift economic growth. We've changed the industrial system. Business investment is running at a historically high level. We have very low interest rates historically and we have very low rates of inflation. Now all of those things are benign and positive for economic growth. It has always been the case that the way you create more jobs is overwhelmingly to have more economic growth. There's nothing revolutionary about that as a statement of economic reality. It's been self evident for years. When you have a recession it's because you have no economic growth and your jobless rate goes up. And we do need to promote faster and stronger sustainable economic growth in Australia. We also need to clear away the obstructions to job creation, that's why we've reformed the industrial relations system. We need to give particular incentives to small business.

**JOURNALIST:**

(Inaudible)

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well we anticipate this year 3.5%. All of the indications at the moment are that that will be achieved and I'm simply making the point that to make a big impact on the unemployment rate you do need to grow the economy at a faster rate.

Thank you.