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# PRIME MINISTER

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## TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP DOORSTOP - AUSTRALIA CENTRE, LONDON

E&OE.....

**JOURNALIST:**

Mr Howard are you willing to accept a sunset clause in the Work for the Dole scheme?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No. I think we should get the whole bill and I welcome the change of heart by the Labor Party. They have caught up with the rest of the world, including here in Britain where there are lots of similarities between the approach of the new Labor Government and our approach. You need a number of strategies to do with unemployment and our Work for the Dole proposal is but one of those - an important one, and I welcome the fact that the Labor party appears to be shifting ground.

**JOURNALIST:**

But the Senate battle is not over.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well the minute to minute detail is something my colleagues back in Australia can handle but the Labor Party has given up on the threshold issue and that is very welcome.

**JOURNALIST:**

On the trip, Prime Minister, you promised the party before you left you would attack Pauline Hanson in tonight's speech and you haven't. Why is that?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, what I said is that I would deal with the issue, but I decided...

**JOURNALIST:**

You said you would in that speech?

**PRIME MINISTER: [**

Well, no. I decided that as the issue was raised in the context of the interviews that I did on the BBC it was.... I had covered the issues then. And I hadn't expected that and that is why I decided not to deal with it.

**JOURNALIST:**

Do you stand by Geoff Prosser?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Absolutely.

**JOURNALIST:**

Isn't it an issue though that needs further reiteration?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No, I think there is a balance you have to strike between on the one hand dealing with it, and where appropriate attacking, and on the other hand keeping the untrue and negative publicity associated with it going. I mean every time you talk about it it gets another run. And everybody says "isn't this ridiculous and outrageous and terrible" but you keep talking about it. So, you're really between the devil and the deep blue sea. As the issue was raised on the BBC with me by three commentators and one was stupid enough to talk about "rampant racism" in Australia, I mean, I nearly fell of my the decision after that interview not to further refer to it lest I run the risk of perpetuating the new urban myth that appears to be around.

**JOURNALIST:**

Mr Howard, Mr Prosser has misled the House over his business dealings...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

This is my last answer but I don't know what exactly, exactly what he said in the House today. And I really think the last sort of figleaf of a London convention should be preserved in relation to not sort of talking about..... don't ask me to interpret what was said in the House a few hours ago. I mean, I have a lot of confidence in him. Full confidence in him. But as to the nuances as to what was said in the House today, leave that to the boys and girls back home.