



2

**PRIME MINISTER**

5 September 1997

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER  
THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP  
DOORSTOP INTERVIEW  
LIBERAL PARTY FEDERAL SECRETARIAT**

E & OE .....

**JOURNALIST:**

Do you think you'll have as much chance of success in the Senate given the comments yesterday?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, this is a fair solution to a huge problem created by the Labor Party. It strikes the right balance. The principles of the amendment are not negotiable. I am prepared to talk with the Labor Party on secondary issues. But things like the right to negotiate and all of the other major provisions of the legislation are non-negotiable. And it's up to the Labor Party to find some commonsense. Having created the problems, they shouldn't obstruct us in trying to solve it.

**JOURNALIST:**

The National Party members are going down to [inaudible] the Farmers Federation to make amendments to the legislation. Would you be looking at any of their proposed changes?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Look, we have already had a very extensive internal debate. I understand the strength of feeling in the farm community. But, I repeat, this legislation guarantees security for Australia's farmers. The concerns of the National Farmers Federation are misplaced. I am sure that this will deliver the security that farmers are entitled to have. I am not interested in amendments of any consequence to the legislation, from the other side either. We've had that debate. We have reached agreement as a Coalition behind the 10 Point Plan. This legislation, after months of discussion, gives effect to that 10 Point Plan. And the Australian people want this thing through the Parliament without delay. They don't want it obstructed. They want this thing off the national agenda so that we

can get on to other issues. We have debated this and argued it and thought about it for long enough now. And it is in the national interest that this legislation be passed and those who attempt to block the passage of the legislation are deserting the national interest.

**JOURNALIST:**

Are you confident of Coalition unity on the native title amendments?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I am confident of overwhelming, continued support within the Parliamentary parties. We've had very, very lengthy debates on this. And the 10 Point Plan and the legislation was approved by the Party Room with overwhelming support. The legislation was endorsed by the Party Room and the Government Members Committee as being a proper legislative expression of the 10 Point Plan. And, against that background, I'm confident that that support will hold, as it should because it's a fair measure. It's a just measure and it strikes the right balance.

**JOURNALIST:**

The National Party's going to be debating it on the weekend...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, that's proper...that's a matter for their organisation. I don't wish to comment on that. That's an entirely proper part of the organisational process of the Party.

**JOURNALIST:**

Could I just ask you about jobs, Mr Howard, and...

**PRIME MINISTER:**

The jobs, yes.

**JOURNALIST:**

Will the preservation of Australian jobs be the priority, your priority, in the TCF industry?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, what I said about it yesterday stands. Job security is the major concern and goal of my Government at the present time. It's a very important issue for Australia. And when we take decisions we ask ourselves always, what impact will this have on jobs. And in relation to TCF, in relation to other decisions we've taken, including taxation, job security is absolutely paramount.

[ENDS]