

# Television interview with Karl Stefanovic – The Today Show

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

The Prime Minister joins us now. PM, good morning to you.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Good morning Karl. Good to be with you.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

Are you going to pony up?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, I think Bill Shorten has got to pony up and be fair dinkum.

You know, we put out on Monday a proposed resolution which would set out all of the disclosures that people had to make and the assurances they had to give. And I set it out there.

Bill had said he wanted to be bipartisan. I sent it to him and I said alright, here it is, you tell me what you think about it.

We had a meeting yesterday, Karl. He came to the meeting. He did not propose one amendment. He had no detailed comments to make, no changes to make.

I sat there with my iPad for two hours with him and I could not get him to specify what changes he wanted.

He said he had to get more advice. He had to consult someone. I thought he was the Leader of the Opposition.

Anyway, he was there with Penny Wong. Between them they could not come up with any amendments.

Now, they've said they are going to do that and go away and come back but you know, time is moving on.

What he has got to do is decide whether he is fair dinkum, whether he wants to resolve this problem or exploit it.

He has got to decide whether he wants to be part of the solution or continue to be part of the problem.

What I want to do is before Christmas, before the end of the year do the following – I want everyone to make full disclosures of all the relevant material. You know, where their parents were born and so forth. If they have been a citizen of another country, how they renounced that citizenship or how

it otherwise came to an end. Provide that evidence. I want all that to be done.

The Parliament has then got to have some time consider it and then the Parliament has got to decide who, if any, to refer to the High Court.

That's what we have got to get done.

But the sooner Shorten is fair dinkum and produces what he proposes, and which we will obviously consider in good faith, the sooner we can get the matter resolved.

I took him at his word about being bipartisan.

If he had been genuine, he would have come to the meeting and said thanks for your proposal, here are the amendments I propose. We would have gone through them in a business-like way and we would have come out of it with something that was agreed but he didn't have anything to say.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

I tell you what, he has come out in a media since – you must feel like a chump the way he has treated you?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, no, I just think the people that he is treating as chumps are the Australian people.

He has got to decide whether he wants to be part of the solution or part of the problem.

Now, this is a man who stood up and said we need to be bipartisan.

I have presented, on Monday, after a Cabinet meeting, a detailed set of disclosures. Everyone has got them.

He has had them since Monday. I invited him for his comments and reaction. We scheduled a meeting.

If he was fair dinkum he would have come to the meeting and said, 'Okay, Clause F, I think we should add this or delete that. Clause G, add this, delete that'. That's what business-like people will do.

He did not do that.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

Okay.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And that's why it was disappointing. He said he is going to do it, like he was talking breezily this morning about: 'Oh, over the next few days'.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

Yeah.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, do you know what? The Senate is meeting on Monday and the Senate is going to pass a resolution to deal with this on Monday and at this stage we don't know, it is only days away and we don't know where Labor stands.

If he is fair dinkum and he wants to resolve the issue he should have some detailed amendments to our resolution in front of us and then we can work out where we can make agreement.

But in principle full disclosure, complete transparency, everything done and dealt with before Christmas.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

Alright.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

That's my goal.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

Alright. Enough of Bill Shorten because after all, he is the Opposition Leader.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Correct – that's right.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

Boy oh boy are you under the pump at the moment!

(Laughter)

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, I am a good man in a crisis, Karl. You know, everyone else gets frenzied, particularly in the media. I'm very calm.

The High Court has presented us with a big challenge. They have said that it doesn't matter whether you know about it or not, if you have got dual-citizenship you are out. Okay?

Now, we took a different approach to the High Court. We said – we argued that if you are born in Australia then foreign citizenship by descent, you know, through your parents et cetera, should not disqualify you unless you have accepted it or acknowledged it or unless you knew about it and didn't do anything to renounce it.

Anyway, they rejected it. They have taken a very strict literalist view. There is now a genuine, in the media, there is an extraordinary witch-hunt going on.

I mean, I think the attacks on Josh Frydenberg are un-Australian.

You know, the suggestion, for example – think about this – Josh Frydenberg's mother was born in the Budapest ghetto in 1943. She had been stripped of her citizenship by the Hungarian fascist because she was a Jew. The only reason they didn't push her into the gas chamber was because the Russian Army arrived and when Hitler was defeated and stopped them.

And you have got people out in the media saying Josh Frydenberg is a citizen of the country that would have gassed his mother had the war not come to an end when it did.

Three-quarters of the Jews of Hungary were sent into the gas chambers-

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

This is the problem-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

With the connivance and support and participation of the Hungarian government at the time.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

This is the problem. With the greatest respect, PM.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

We have just got to get the facts out on the table and deal with them in a responsible way.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

PM, with the greatest respect, this is part of the problem here – you are getting bogged down in the minutia of something when you should be getting on with running the country. Are you going to survive this?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I can assure you that's what I'm doing. I'm going to APEC today. We are talking about trade. We are talking about opening up more markets for Australia.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

Are you going to survive this?

**PRIME MINISTER:**

We are going to be signing new free trade agreements.

What we are doing is getting on with the job.

Dealing with the North Korean threat.

Dealing with terrorism in Southeast Asia, particularly in the Philippines.

We are meeting with the President of the Philippines. Meeting with President Trump. Meeting with those leaders.

It is vitally important that that work is done just as it is important that we get on with the job of reducing company tax.

You know we have seen, despite all of the frenzy in the media – and there has been plenty of frenzy – what we have seen is the creation in the last year of 371,500 jobs, 85 per cent of them full-time.

We have had the longest run of job creation, monthly job creation, Karl, in 23 years.

I went to the last election talking about jobs and growth and we're delivering them.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

PM, with the greatest respect you are waffling this morning. You are waffling.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Well, Karl, you have got a job. If you are looking for a job and you need a job and you have got one because of the strong economic leadership we have provided you may think it is waffling but if you have been unemployed and you are getting a chance to get ahead, you would think that's pretty, you would say you are being very patronising.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

Okay – this is what I want.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Saying young people jobs is waffle!

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

This is the real you. This is what we want.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

No, no, well this is, and it is, mate, and Karl, is it the real you to patronise people who are out of work and are getting a chance to get ahead?

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

I'm not, I'm not patronising.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I don't think it is. I think you're a fair dinkum Aussie. I think you've got compassion. And I think you know that my job is to ensure that more Australians have the chance to get ahead and realise their dreams and that's what I'm doing.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

OK, this is what we want to see.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'm not going to be distracted by the frenzy. I'm not distracted by the frenzy.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

The perception is, PM, the perception is-

**PRIME MINISTER:**

I'm resolving the problems.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

Okay.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Resolving the problems and delivering.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

The perception is you are supposed to be running the country but it looks like you can't even run your own party.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Karl, that's nonsense. The party – look at all of the big issues we have dealt with recently.

The same-sex marriage issue. The postal survey – total support. It has gone out there. 80 per cent or thereabouts of Australians have participated in it and we will know the result next week.

The National Energy Guarantee, that has overwhelming support in our party. It is out there. That will have the result of bringing down wholesale power prices by 20-25 per cent over the next decade through to 2030.

That is the practical political economic leadership that Australians want.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

Yeah.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

And that's what I'm delivering.

Now, we have this issue with citizenship. We will resolve it. We will resolve it. That's my commitment.

But the issue for Australians is, can I get a job? Can my kids get a job? Will my business get ahead? Can I start a business? Can I afford to pay the power bills? Will the lights stay on when I do pay the power bills?

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

Yes.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Those are the big questions and that's what I'm providing the answers to.

**KARL STEFANOVIC:**

Okay, let's hope that you can go and do that, PM. I think Australia just wants to be led and more importantly, they want to be led well. Thanks for your time today. Appreciate it.

**PRIME MINISTER:**

Thanks a lot Karl.

**[ENDS]**