



**LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
THE HON. MALCOLM TURNBULL MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WENTWORTH**

19 November 2008

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE HON. MALCOLM TURNBULL MP
INTERVIEW WITH GEOFF HUTCHISON
720 ABC, PERTH**

*Subjects: HMAS Sydney commemoration; 'Australia'; Ord River scheme;
agriculture.*

E&OE.....

HUTCHISON:

Good morning.

MALCOLM TURNBULL:

G'day, how are you? Good to be with you.

HUTCHISON:

Very well, thank you. Firstly your thoughts on being in Geraldton for today's commemoration; what does it mean to you?

MALCOLM TURNBULL:

Well it's a very moving day. I heard one of your previous guests on your programme describe it as sobering and I feel, I think it is a time for great reflection.

HUTCHISON:

I hate to go to what was my natural second question and it's actually inappropriate in comparison. One of the other issues we were talking about; you've just come from Kununurra – quite a hot debate about the film *Australia*. Give us your review if you wouldn't mind Mr Turnbull?

MALCOLM TURNBULL:

Well it was amazing to watch it at Kununurra. I'd been up there all day talking to irrigators and community leaders, business leaders, about Ord stage 1 and the irrigation scheme and all of their innovation and energy and their hopes for Ord stage 2.

But then of course to sit there in the picture ground there at Kununurra in the open air and to be with so many of the cast, particularly so many of the Indigenous cast, and you could feel the excitement and the pride in the audience when the Aboriginal languages were used, which were shown extensively through the film, so much of the film using the language. And there was just so much excitement and of course every time a familiar piece of scenery came onto the screen there were cries of pleasure and excitement, oohs and ahs. It was great.

I didn't go to Kununurra to see *Australia* the movie – it was an incidental benefit of a long planned trip there. But I think it was definitely the best premiere to be at.

HUTCHISON:

How many stars do you give the film?

MALCOLM TURNBULL:

Oh a lot. Five out of five or four and a half out of five. I think it was a great film.

HUTCHISON:

You liked it that much. Our guest is Malcolm Turnbull. Mr Turnbull you'll be going to the ceremony for the internment of the unknown sailor later this morning and then to the sunset service tonight. You mentioned your talks when you were a little further north of us yesterday, talking about the Ord. You'll know of course that the State Government has brought to an end the moratorium of genetically modified cotton.

MALCOLM TURNBULL:

Thank God for that.

HUTCHISON:

When you look at the Ord, what do you see? And a lot of people have seen it and there has been awe, but when will promise become reality in that part of our world, do you think?

MALCOLM TURNBULL:

Well, I think that's a very revealing question and I don't want to sound critical but the Ord River scheme, the Ord Valley there is reality. There is a thriving agricultural community there. There is enormous investment in new irrigated agriculture, in forestry; enormous investment in sandalwood. We saw huge mango orchards and a state-of-the-art packing plant there. I mean, there are new crops – there's an ancient Aztec crop that's being grown there called chia, which is growing in demand, it's got enormous benefit and Australia is producing a third of the world's output. So I would

say that the thing that encouraged me, that excited me about being up there was just the enthusiasm and the energy and the optimism and the spirit of innovation.

I mean the farmers there recognise that they've got plenty of water, that's true; they've got good soil types, that's also true, but the climate poses enormous challenges, particularly with pests, and that is why the ban on GM cotton or Bollgard cotton was absolutely, absolute madness. It was environmental madness because one of the biggest problems of growing cotton and one of the reasons why it stopped in the Ord of course was the amount of pesticide that had to be used.

So the fact that you've got a GM cotton breed that is essentially resistant to the major pest means the amount of pesticide that's used is dramatically reduced which is good both the farmers but, above all, for the environment.

HUTCHISON:

Malcolm Turnbull, thank you for talking to me today.

MALCOLM TURNBULL:

Yeah, great to be with you.

[ends]