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E&OE TRANSCRIPT
TELEVISION INTERVIEW
TODAY SHOW
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SUBJECTS: Australia's successful bid for the 2023 Women's Soccer World Cup; Qantas; COVID-19 in Victoria.

KARL STEFANOVIC, HOST: We're joined now by Tourism and Trade Minister Simon Birmingham and Deputy Opposition Leader Richard Marles. Good morning guys. Nice to see you.

RICHARD MARLES, DEPUTY LEADER OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY:
Morning, Karl.

STEFANOVIC: Simon, look at you, you're an opportunist, hey.

Laughter

SIMON BIRMINGHAM, MINISTER FOR TRADE, TOURISM AND INVESTMENT: Hey look, this is a glimmer of hope at the end a very dark tunnel for our tourism industry to see the 2023 World Cup coming along. And as a father of two daughters, who woke one of them up sneaking into her bedroom to steal her Matildas scarf this morning, I'm thrilled about what this means for the recognition and respect for women's sport too.

STEFANOVIC: Okay, we will get on to that a little bit later because it is a wonderful,

wonderful thing for Australia. But first of all, Simon, are you going to bail the aviation industry out?

BIRMINGHAM: We have been supporting the aviation industry. These are very dark days for the aviation industry. Now we have obviously stepped up with billions of dollars in support. The JobKeeper program, running until 27 September. We acknowledge that there are ongoing challenges, aviation and tourism will face, and we are working through what future support looks like in terms of the sector there. As well as, of course, targeted specific programs. But we also want to see planes back up in the sky and that means we do need to see the economy get back to normal and the States where it can and opening up of those borders where they can to allow people to start moving again. Because that will get people buying air tickets and planes flying, and that is what we really need.

ALLISON LANGDON, HOST: Richard, I mean, 6,000 jobs and we're being told too that more could go. How would you have handled this? Would you have given more money sooner?

MARLES: The Government's the ones in the chair here. But I think what's clear is that at the end of the day, when this is all over, we need to be having two airlines in this country. And the really tragic news that we have heard in the last 24 hours in relation to Qantas, given that Virgin was doing it tough already, just means that the Government needs to be really clear about what it's plan is to make sure there are two carriers when this is done. One thing that is absolutely clear, the idea that JobKeeper is going to end in 94 days, you know, is an idea I just don't think is going to survive contact with reality. But they need to be giving - the government needs to be giving - a sense of certainty to the aviation industry now that JobKeeper will extend for people in the aviation industry beyond that drop dead deadline in September. Because the idea that it is going to be back to normal by then is obviously wrong.

STEFANOVIC: Simon, I am going to press you on that. You didn't answer the question about whether you are going to specifically bail out the aviation industry. Are you going to add more to it?

BIRMINGHAM: We know the aviation industry, the tourism sector are special cases in this crisis that we face. They were the first into it and they will probably be the last out of it, particularly when it comes to international aviation. So yes, we're working through what type of additional support is necessary. JobKeeper is there until 27 September. We've

made it very clear we will be announcing the future in relation to that by the end of July. We're going to work hard to ensure that we provide what support we can. But Karl, you know I stood on this program months ago as well, and said that devastatingly we wouldn't be able to save every job or every business. We must have a viable aviation industry. We will make sure we have a viable aviation industry. But this is the worst economic problem the globe has seen since the Great Depression. And it is going to continue to take extraordinary measures which we've taken and will continue to take to get the country through it but we can't pretend it's going to be an easy journey either.

LANGDON: I think people just need clarity on what's going to happen with JobKeeper, not at the end of next month, but they need it now.

MARLES: They need it now. And the point here is, Simon is right in saying that aviation is a special case. So the question then is what does that imply? What is the special circumstances, what is the special package which is going to be put in place? I think that's the point that people are looking for from the Government today.

STEFANOVIC: What's not great-

BIRMINGHAM: Richard, we've already given hundreds of millions of dollars to the aviation sector in addition to the type of support through JobKeeper. And that is why we continue to have a look at what's necessary there. But I don't think Richard can pretend that every job can be saved and I don't hear that he is. And I am pleased about that-

MARLES: We're not but-

BIRMINGHAM: Because sadly, as terrible as it is for the individual families, but we do have to recognise that international flights won't be going for quite some time to come. And that's what Alan Joyce has made clear. You need those domestic services running just to save the jobs that can be saved in the sector and they've made decisions about the way they see the international market looking, not in a couple of months time, but next year and even the year after that.

STEFANOVIC: The issue is going to be do you throw money at something and you know it's going to get worse, so that money is propping it up for the moment but you're going to lose it in the end anyway in an industry that is doing it tough. Anyway, we will get to that at another time. In terms, Simon, of the hotels in Victoria now, we have to move on to COVID

in Victoria because it is terrible. Just psychologically I think, even beyond the figures. How did that breach happen in the hotels in Victoria? Do you know?

BIRMINGHAM: That's a question that I hope the Victorian Government can get to the bottom of-

STEFANOVIC: But you must - someone in Government must have asked.

BIRMINGHAM: And this will be a topic of discussion at National Cabinet today. So I do hope that we can get clear answers there that every state and territory can learn from. We have obviously offered the services of the Australian Defence Force to help in terms of anything that is required in these matters. That could include hotel quarantine support and because that is our front line safeguard around those coming in from overseas. We're going to need that safeguard, that safety blanket of hotel quarantine for many, many months to come and we've got to have confidence in the way that it works. It's worked exceptionally well right across the country. We've got to make sure that that continues to be the case and we don't see any such leakage again.

LANGDON: Sending in the ADF in big numbers, yes or no?

BIRMINGHAM: Sorry, I just missed the question there.

LANGDON: Sending in the Defence Force in big numbers in Victoria, would you be a yes or a no to that?

BIRMINGHAM: That's a matter for the Victorian Government. If they're confident they've got the resources and the man power, the people power on the ground to get the job done, then that's fine and fantastic. But if they need additional support, the Federal Government stands willing with the ADF to lend that additional support.

STEFANOVIC: They are all over the shop at the moment, the Victorian Government. We don't even know what happened in the hotels and there seems to be some kind of weird cover-up going on. If you are living in Victoria, you just want answers and there is no straight talking. Dan Andrews has been great during this crisis but in the last week, it's kind of been all over the shop. There needs to be clarity, don't you reckon Richard?

MARLES: I think it is a really difficult issue. I think you are right that Daniel Andrews has

done a great job over the journey. And in many respects he's led the nation. I actually think this is a cautionary tale not just for Victoria, but for the whole country. If the disease is out there at any level, what this shows is that it can flare up. We need to be really vigilant about this. I mean, Simon's right, we absolutely - and you're right, we do need to find out the answers to what's happen in those quarantine facilities. But I think the point here is this is a really fragile situation, not just here, but everywhere. And you can make a small mistake and it can have very significant consequences. And in that sense, it is really important that we are vigilant and cautious around the country, particularly in easing restrictions because we only ever want to have to do this once.

STEFANOVIC: Simon, really, really quickly before we go. World Cup, Women's World Cup, what does that mean economically for tourism in this country?

BIRMINGHAM: Look, it's a forecast \$500 million lift to our economy. But more important than that, it is such a huge psychological boost. Finally a glimmer of hope at the end of this dark tunnel that our tourism industry is in. And I'm just so thrilled for all of those who have worked on the bid, but for our tourism in hospitality industry to know that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and that we're going to get there and get back to hosting the most magnificent events in the world as Australia does so well.

MARLES: Completely agree.

STEFANOVIC: Great guys. Thank you so much for that.

BIRMINGHAM: And go Matildas!

MARLES: Go Matildas.

ENDS

Authorised by Paul Erickson, ALP, Canberra.