



THE HON DR CRAIG EMERSON MP
MINISTER FOR TRADE

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WENDY KINGSTON: Today's Galaxy poll puts Labor on a dismal 29 per cent, while the Nielsen poll recorded a jump of 4 percentage points, to 30. And the PM's popularity rose 4 points as well. Regardless, the Coalition would still thrash the Government if an election were held today. For the Government's perspective, we're joined now by Trade Minister Craig Emerson. Dr Emerson, thank you for your time.

CRAIG EMERSON: It's a pleasure, Wendy.

KINGSTON: First of all, what do you make of these polls out today?

EMERSON: Obviously, from a very low base we are improving. There are positive signs for Labor, and that is an increase in support for the Labor Government. But they are low levels. Mr Abbott, I think, is in this situation: the Australian people are seeing through him, and he's actually suffered the worst rating since becoming Opposition Leader, because they know that he just plays political games and isn't interested in real policy.

KINGSTON: Speaking of policy, we've learned a lot over the weekend. Your standing in the polls won't actually be helped by the damaging Cabinet leaks. Do you know who was leaking this information?

EMERSON: No, I don't, and Cabinet leaks don't help anyone other than Oppositions. This is not a new phenomenon: there were leaks in the Fraser Cabinets, the Hawke Cabinets, the Keating Cabinets and the Howard Cabinets. But they don't really benefit anyone, including those who do the leaking. They only benefit the Opposition of the day, and therefore it needs to stop.

KINGSTON: Is it a case of kicking the Government while it's down? As you said, the polls are low. And it is a base to build on, but it's quite dismal.

EMERSON: Well I think people in the broader community don't sit around talking about Cabinet leaks. They sit around talking about governments working for them, working for working people in Australia. And that's what we're doing: we're backing working people in terms of creating with them higher-paying jobs, better jobs and more jobs. We've got a relatively low unemployment rate in this country. So that's what, as a Labor Government, we will continue to do, and that is to back working families and the working people of this country.

KINGSTON: Now, job number one obviously for Julia Gillard today will be telling Cabinet ...probably delivering some strong words. Any idea what she will tell you?

EMERSON: Well, that would be a pre-emptive Cabinet leak and ...

KINGSTON: But it would be an exclusive, so if you wanted to tell me something ...

EMERSON: ... and I can't discuss Cabinet leaks before or after the fact. Yes, it would be an exclusive on Nine, but I just repeat that they don't help anyone other than Opposition leaders.

KINGSTON: Alright. Maybe we'll get you on at 4.30 and see what's actually happened. Thanks very much for talking to us.

EMERSON: I wouldn't hold out that hope.

KINGSTON: Okay. Many thanks. Speak to you later.

EMERSON: Thanks a lot.