



**THE HON DR CRAIG EMERSON MP**  
MINISTER FOR SMALL BUSINESS, INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS AND  
THE SERVICE ECONOMY  
MINISTER FOR COMPETITION POLICY AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
MINISTER ASSISTING THE MINISTER FOR FINANCE ON  
DEREGULATION

Transcript  
Early AM interview with Samantha Hawley  
21 June 2010

E&OE

---

*Subjects: Polls, Resource Super Profits Tax, Penrith by-election.*

---

**EASTLEY:** Today marks the beginning of what could be the last week of Federal Parliament before Kevin Rudd calls an election. Senior Labor ministers say the party's crushing defeat at the state by-election in Penrith at the weekend, in New South Wales, has no federal ramifications, but if today's Newspoll is accurate, voters are unhappy with Labor nationally.

Mr Rudd has taken a hit in the preferred Prime Minister stakes, down three percentage points to 46 per cent. Tony Abbott's position improved, he's up by four points, to 37 per cent.

A resolution to the mining tax controversy is crucial for Labor. On that front the Treasurer, Wayne Swan, is accusing some in the mining sector of using strong-arm tactics to silence businesses that support the tax.

Our reporter in Canberra, Samantha Hawley, spoke to the Small Business Minister Craig Emerson about that allegation, and Labor's fortunes.

**EMERSON:** Personally I'd rather move on, I'd rather - I'm sure when Wayne Swan made those statements, he did it on the basis of direct knowledge. I have no reason to believe otherwise, I have no reason to believe otherwise. If the Treasurer has said that, I will back him in. But the point is, are we going to now just spend the next few days debating that, or are we going to continue the

discussions that are going quite well with a very substantial range of mining companies in this country? I'd rather do that.

**HAWLEY:** Do you believe that Kevin Rudd can turn the polls around, before an election?

**EMERSON:** I do, and the truth is that Labor Governments have been in this sort of position before, usually....

**HAWLEY:** Well, never this bad.

**EMERSON:** You've got to have a long memory, and I'm saying that I've been associated with Labor governments for a very long period of time. I've been associated with reforming governments for a very long period of time. In the 1985 tax reform, when a Labor Government repaired the holes in the income tax base created by business executives taking each other out to lunch at taxpayers' expense, converting their income into tax free capital gains, and booking up their golf club fees to the taxpayer, the Labor Government repaired those holes, and cut the top two marginal rates of tax. I actually had a look at the opinion polls around that time, and they headed south.

**HAWLEY:** Julia Gillard, she of course has indicated that she won't challenge, but should Kevin Rudd put his party first, if the polls continue the way that they've been going, and pass over to Julia Gillard for the good of the Labor Party, for the good of the Labor brand?

**EMERSON:** The good of the Labor Party, and the good of the country, are the same thing, in that we are interested in reform, and we are going to press ahead with tax reform in the great tradition of reforming Labor Government.

**HAWLEY:** The Penrith by-election on the weekend returned a record 25 per cent swing against Labor. That's extraordinary, isn't it?

**EMERSON:** It's a big swing in a state by-election, created in controversial circumstances.

**HAWLEY:** State elections are of course fought on state issues, but do you think it has any reflection on what is happening federally?

**EMERSON:** There's no evidence of that. I don't believe that to be the case. The circumstances of the Penrith by-election are controversial in the first place; there obviously was a very strong focus on the local issues in Penrith.

**EASTLEY:** The Small Business Minister, Craig Emerson, speaking to Samantha Hawley.