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CONVSEARATION HOUR

ALI MOORE discusses the Liberal Party leadership and MALCOLM TURBULL with ANDREW PEGLER.

ANDREW PEGLER: Obviously Turnbull has come out there straight away and knocked the silvertail thing on the head because the first perceptions that the Australian public will have is, you know, this guy is this kind of isolated, rich, distant type of guy. But the reality is his story's pretty good.....

ALI MOORE: That was very interesting that the first thing he did within two minutes of standing up he said, "I don't come to the position from a lifetime of privilege. I know what it's like to be short of money. I've lived in rented flats, you know, I've had a single parent." And, in fact, just before Malcolm Turnbull stood up, we spoke to Andrew Robb. He made exactly the same point and then, indeed, so did Julie Bishop. She says that Malcolm Turnbull's life story reflects the values of the Liberal Party. Reward for hard work and enterprise. As Barrie Cassidy told us a little earlier in the program, they know what their polling is telling them. They know what the issues are.

ANDREW PEGLER: Yeah, well they've got their finger on the pulse. But his story is compelling and I think it'll come out as such, and I think he's going to give the Rudd Government a run for their money. Look, he literally did come from fairly challenging circumstances. I'd be interested to find out a little bit more about his father. I don't know anything about what...

ALI MOORE: I have to say I don't know about his background. Andrew Robb was telling us that he lived in rented accommodation in Wentworth, which is where is his current seat, with his father, so I don't know what his particular family circumstances are, but the point being that Andrew Robb was making is that he is a self-made man.

ANDREW PEGLER: Yes, and he was, you know, a visionary type of guy. I mean, if you look at the early days of the Internet he was there with, I think it was Ozemail and he was doing all sorts of things at a time when people were going, you know, the Inter what? And the World Wide where? He does have a sense for what's going to happen and develop, and I think even if the fact that he jumped straight into the environmental portfolio indicated that he very much was on the cutting edge of where this sort of zeitgeist in this community was going...

ALI MOORE: But, I think, even more importantly and this a point that we also heard from Barrie Cassidy, but the fact that he made the point about this financial meltdown that we are experiencing at the moment, and I wonder, as Barrie did, the extent to

which last night's 4.4 per cent fall on Wall Street made any waverers in the party room think, "We're heading for Armageddon on the financial front, who do we want leading?" And if you're talking about money and talking about finances, then the man with the experience is Malcolm Turnbull.

ANDREW PEGLER: Well, that's a very good point. Barrie always comes up with the good ones.

AM: He does, he does. That's why he does Insiders.

ANDREW PEGLER: He does. But, no, that is a good point and I imagine that they will use that. So they'll talk up the fear and point at the solution being Malcolm Turnbull and then you'll, I guess, you know, what will the Labor Party's response be? Who knows. I guess they're gonna say, "Look at the Liberal Party record to date. You know, we're in this sort of circumstances in the economy now as a result of your leadership. Where were you in the Cabinet when this was happening?" and that, and so forth. I suppose you can write the script, but the outcome is still up to the punter at this stage.

ALI MOORE: We know that Brendan Nelson is going to the backbench. We know that Malcolm Turnbull invited him to sit on the front bench but he confirmed that he will go to the backbench. But Julie Bishop. I thought that that was another interesting part of what Malcolm Turnbull's had to say, is that he's emphasising that he has, in his words, he knows and he trusts Julie Bishop, she's a very dear friend and worked closely together. Julie Bishop then reiterated that, and the two of them, there'll be no change to the deputy leadership.

ANDREW PEGLER: I think they'd be silly to do so. The, look, she's a capable operator and, oh, you know, I guess having a male and a female in the leadership role is more of a reflection of how society is going. I mean, just take a look at the McCain-Palin ticket. That's been a bit of a dream.

ALI MOORE: Oh, dear. You're not, are you, drawing parallels between Sarah Palin and Julie Bishop? I've not heard that one before. That's a rather long bow isn't it?

ANDREW PEGLER: Well, they both work out, apparently.

ALI MOORE: Right, okay. That's the extent of it, is it?

ANDREW PEGLER: I think the difference would be that Sarah Palin can, what they call, field dress a moose.

ALI MOORE: Field dress a moose.

ANDREW PEGLER: Which I won't go into the finer details.

ALI MOORE: No, I'd rather you didn't, actually.

ANDREW PEGLER: But I can't imagine Julie Bishop field dressing a kangaroo. But I think that they're both coming from politically similar areas. I think Sarah Palin [is] further towards the right than what Julie would be. I mean, let's face it, there wouldn't be that many people that would be further to the right than Sarah Palin. That, in itself, is a whole, another discussion and she, I think, is a disturbing development and a major distraction in what should be an important, hopefully, outcome for peace, ...

ALI MOORE: We didn't get to talk about the US today. I was actually going to talk about it with our international guest, but we got a little bit sidetracked because it was just as these numbers come out. Look, one interesting thing out of what Malcolm Turnbull said today in his press conference is, when he was addressing the silvertail issue, and he says, "I know what it's like to be short of money. I know what it's like to live in rented flats." I've had numerous text messages here from people saying, "Well, what's wrong with living in rented flats? My friend lives in rented accommodation and owns 12 houses." I must say, I live in rented accommodation and I'm fully employed.

ANDREW PEGLER: Yes, yes.

ALI MOORE: I mean, I wonder, that was, I suppose, a curious thing to say, "rented flats". What's wrong with a rented flat?

ANDREW PEGLER: Well, I guess the overall message is, and most people won't be poring over the detail like we are, they'll just be, the takeaway message will be, Oh, yeah, he came from struggle street and that'll be about it.

ALI MOORE (in a kind of Cockney accent): He's a battler like us.

ANDREW PEGLER: Yeah, well him and Alan Jones live on the struggle street.

ALI MOORE: I know. It's perhaps a mmm, any way, it's going to be very interesting to see how that plays out and the extent to which he's successful with that message.

ANDREW PEGLER: Well, absolutely, and I kind of, he interests me. I think he's a compelling sort of a guy. He's got a story that will come out and I think people will be initially quite interested by it. In the long term I'm not too sure how that will play out. But he is, as you said, his story aligns to the Liberal values of enterprise and self-achievement and so on and so forth and I think he's gonna make an impact. As you said off air, this is going to be fun.

ALI MOORE: Well, it's going to be, fun. I'm going to get castigated now because I say fun from other people's trials and tribulations, but it's exciting...

ANDREW PEGLER: And excitement is fun.

ALI MOORE: As a journalist, I mean, you like to report on all sides of politics and all machinations so when there is movement at the station it doesn't matter where it is it's always more interesting and it does seem that Brendan Nelson is going to hold a press conference of his own shortly.