

## **Concession Speech: Gough Whitlam, Opposition Leader (ALP)**

***Cabramatta, October 25, 1969***

“Mr Gorton set out to exploit and dramatise these two issues in foreign affairs in the election; he invited a verdict from the people and he has got it.

The people’s attitude had been dramatised by the defeat of the Minister for External Affairs, the election of a former Deputy High Commissioner to Malaysia as a Labor M.P., and the fact that a former Australian intelligence officer in Vietnam had taken the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr W. McMahon, to preferences.

As a result of the election the United States Government could reasonably assume that the Australian people wanted their Government to back the U.S. and Britain by signing the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.

Australians also clearly wanted the Government to co-operate with other nations in promoting the economic prosperity of Indonesia.

Never again will there be an election where the leader of a major party will try to shelve as minor issues the problems of schools, houses, hospitals and the urban environment as Mr Gorton had attempted to do.

His negative attitude was reinforced by the sterile slanders of the Treasurer, the Minister for Education and the Minister for Health.

The Labor Party was also greatly helped by the number of outstanding candidates it was able to attract.

The new Parliament will have the greatest influx of talent and drive that it has ever had.

One third of the members of the Labor Party in the new Parliament will be men who have been freshly elected. They are very well qualified and their campaigns showed they have ability.

If the Government can muster a majority it is very doubtful if it will be able to hold together for three years.

The differences in the Government will be exacerbated by the disaster.”

Source: Compiled from The Sydney Morning Herald, October 27<sup>th</sup> 1969, page 4 and original documents.