

## **Concession speech: Andrew Peacock, Opposition Leader (LP)**

***December 1, 1984***

“Well ladies and gentlemen, it’s fairly clear from the election results that you can’t walk on water with feet of clay and not lose stature. And I would say that the resurgence of the Liberal Party is going to be a distinct change in Australian politics, and I say a resurgence because we believe we’ve won 12 seats, nine by the Liberal Party, three by the National Party.

And if it’s not quite that, and I expect it to be, there will be at most a majority for Labor of 16, leaving only eight seats to be won and requiring a mere 1.7 per cent swing, which all of you know is a minimal swing after three years in Government, if in fact this Prime Minister can last that long.

I believe that we out-campaigned the Labor Party because we addressed the people with issues that were relevant to them, we showed them the way for the future and they came to us in very significant numbers. In other elements of strategy I think our marginal seats strategy worked in Victoria, as we’ve maintained for some weeks that it would. We have had very good gains in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, and in fact very significant gains in a number of seats we didn’t win but have gone very close to and need a very small margin for next time.

The implications for the Labor Party are very serious indeed. They cannot rest on their record even after 20 months. The pressure by the Left and the Centre Left will have an impact not only on Mr Hawke but on Australia because there will undoubtedly be an endeavor to bring him back to earth, to put his feet back on the ground if possible, and the implication of the pressure from the Left for further schemes of socialism and the like which the Australian people will certainly reject in three years’ time.

I’ve noted with very great interest the frantic desire of the Labor Party to paint the picture that there would have been a swing to them – there was a distinct swing away, as you know – a swing to them had there not been so many informal votes. That to me is treating Labor voters with contempt, to say that only Labor voters vote informal, and I know from the reports that have been received at the Liberal Party headquarters that many intending Liberal voters also voted informal. The extent to which in Victoria particularly there could have been in some seats a slightly higher number of informal Labor votes – I have no doubt it was brought about by the element of protest because of the complaints within the Labor Party over both Mr Hawke and some of his more incoherent programs.

So to sum it all up, I once again congratulate the ALP and I congratulate Mr Hawke on his victory. I believe the resurgence to us is a good thing for Australia. The Opposition is now perceived – and I’ll admit it may not have been before – is now perceived as the alternative Government within only 1.7 per cent of making Government, and I have little doubt that in three years’ time I’ll be talking to you from a different position as Prime Minister.”

Source: Compiled from original documents and *The Age*, 3/12/1984, page 22.