

Concession Speech: John Howard, Opposition Leader (LIB)

July 11, 1987

“Well ladies and gentlemen, whilst the final outcome in terms of seats cannot be known, particularly as there are a lot of absent and postal votes because of people being away etc, it is quite clear that the Hawke government has been returned (booing, laughter).

I would like to congratulate the Prime Minister and his government. I would like to wish his government well in the very important responsibility of governing our country over the next three years.

We are about to enter our third century as a nation, and whatever differences that divide us politically, and they are important differences, and they will remain important differences, those things that unite us as Australians are much greater and more enduring than those things that divide us and... (long applause).

Tonight’s result of course is a disappointment but we started a campaign with virtually no commentator or pollster in the country giving us a prospect of winning. We have increased our share of the vote, to what precise extent remains to be seen, but it has increased. And given the difficulties on our side of politics over the last six months, Liberals around Australia can feel well and truly satisfied with the effort that we’ve put into the campaign (cheering and applause).

One of the interesting, one of the interesting features of tonight’s result is the uneven character of the swing. The Liberal party has done very well in some parts of Australia, particularly in the city of Sydney, it has done less well in other parts and there has been an uneven pattern to the vote.

I would like to thank everybody who voted for the Liberal Party. I would like to thank all of the supporters of the Liberal Party. I would particularly like to thank my own personal staff who have worked very hard over the last couple of months (applause).

And finally I’d like to thank my wife, whose love and support over the last six months has been [inaudible] (applause). Thank you. Thank you (applause).

It’s been a very great honour to lead the Liberal Party in this campaign. I have no regrets about any of the policies we ran on — they were right. I have not the slightest doubt that the long-term interests of Australia will ultimately be served by giving to individuals the greatest degree of incentive and encouragement for work and effort.

(Applause and shouting) Thank you, thank you.”

Source: Transcribed from audio at Australian Politics Online