

Victory speech: Bob Hawke, Prime Minister (ALP)

December 1, 1984

“The first thing I want to do is to thank the people of Australia for returning our Government, and I thank, of course, not only the voters, I thank all in the party who have done such a magnificent job to achieve that job.

When you go into an election, I guess, there are three things that you want to do.

First, of course, you want to win, which we have done.

Secondly, you want to have a good workable majority.

We have done that.

And third, of course, you like to get as much icing on the cake as you possibly can.

We had hoped to get a bit more icing on the cake.

We didn't do that.

And that is something for the next time.

The indications that we had had from our own polling suggested that we would get a swing to us of about 1 per cent to 1½ per cent perhaps.

And it looks as though substantially we have been frustrated in that respect by the high informal vote.

We are going to have to have a look at that, but it should be made clear – and I say this because there seems in some of the comments to have been made some criticism of the party and perhaps of the Minister involved – I want to make it quite clear that the voting system we have got in respect of the House of Representatives was the best that we could get through the Senate.

But I would hope that all parties would want to look very carefully at that situation to see what ought to be done where you have achieved a significant reduction in the informal vote in the Senate, but a very significant increase in the informal vote of the House of Representatives.

I don't want to, at least at this stage, dwell any further on that point.

I would like to say one or two other things though.

Firstly, I want to congratulate Mr Peacock, the Leader of the Opposition, for fighting a tenacious campaign.

He must be given credit for that.

From a difficult position he fought hard, and I believe he is to be congratulated for the hard fight which he fought.

I have during the campaign outlined the reasons why there needed to be, in these particular circumstances, a long campaign.

That won't happen again because those circumstances won't arise again.

But I believe probably that the length of the campaign didn't, on balance, go to our advantage.

The other point that I would make is that it was a campaign in which I did not make, on behalf of the Government, large, specific promises.

In those circumstances the negative attacks of the Opposition on certain aspects like the assets test, superannuation tax, I think were able to bite and have some effect.

The final point that I would make is this – that there were a number of people that I would like to have seen in the Parliament.

That includes a few who may lose their seats and some who we would have hoped to have got into the Parliament.

I regret they won't be there, but I conclude as I began, to repeat my thanks to the people of Australia, to the party and the workers who worked so hard to achieve what is after all, one of the few times where you got a Labor Government returned to power, and returned with a significant and comfortable working majority.”

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