

Victory Speech: Bob Hawke, Prime Minister (ALP)

July 11, 1987

“Well my, ah, my friends this a moment of pride and of gratitude.

The first thing I want to say is to thank the Leader of the Opposition, John Howard, for the generosity of the comments that he made in his concession of victory to us tonight. I thank him for those comments and I express certainly the appreciation of the toughness of the campaign which John Howard fought.

Now for the thanks that I want to express. I want firstly to express my very deep gratitude to my staff. I've said on a number of occasions throughout this campaign, and I repeat it now, that I would believe that no political leader in the history of this country has had the great privilege and support of such a loyal and competent personal staff as I have had, and I thank them all for it.

I thank next my ministers. I've also had reason to say that no prime minister I think, certainly in the post-war period, and I would venture to say, in the history of federal politics in this country has had such a competent, loyal and cohesive collection of ministers as it has been my privilege to lead.

I thank them for their work during the first two governments, I thank them for their work during this campaign and I look forward to working with an equally talented ministry in the third Hawke government

Next I thank my party. The Australian Labor Party has a continuity now of nearly 100 years. And in a campaign, it's the prime minister, the leader of a party and those up front, who get all the highlight, all the attention. But it's when you get to polling day itself when you have the opportunity of going around the polling booths and seeing those loyal and dedicated members of the party, those who get no limelight and no public credit who make all these things possible, and to this great party, to its members, its officials, my great gratitude which I express to them on behalf of their party. Because they have been able to be part now of history, to have played their part in the election for the first time for the third successive federal Labor government (applause).

But finally, finally, there is an even more important thank you than any of those that I've already made. It is now nearly twelve months ago, when the parliament reassembled for the Budget session in 1987, that I addressed my caucus.

And I expressed a view then that probably I was the only one in the caucus, perhaps the only person in Australia who believed it — I said that when we next went to the people that not only would we be returned to office, but I believed that we would be returned with an increased majority. And fundamentally I expressed that view because of my faith in the Australian people.

And I want to thank the Australian people for the justification for the faith that I and my party have had in them. And I give this pledge at the beginning of the third Hawke Labor government, that I gave at the beginning of the first Hawke Labor government, and that is that this will be a government for all Australians, not only for those who voted for us but also for those who did not. Because I agree with John Howard — indeed it's been the basis of my philosophy throughout my public life — that those things which unite Australians are more important than those things that divide us.

We have been blessed, I think uniquely in this land, with so many natural advantages, It's my responsibility as Prime Minister to try and harness our great resources, our natural resources, but most importantly our human resources, so that we can develop this country, and hand on to those that come after us an even stronger, more prosperous, and a fairer Australia.

That is my pledge, it is the pledge of my party. Again, I thank everyone who have made it possible for me to savour, to enjoy, and to take pride in this historic moment (applause).

And as I felt that arm coming around me, which I'm pleased to say has been coming around me now for about 35 years, there is of course a thank you that I should have made. And that's to Hazel, who as I said last night at our private function, has not only been a great mate but a great campaigner. Thank you Hazel (applause). And thank you to my family, my kids, my grandkids, and my father.” (Applause)

Source: Transcribed from audio at Australian Politics Online and the Canberra Times.