

Victory Speech: John Howard, Prime Minister (LP)

The Wentworth Hotel, Sydney, 10:55pm, 3 October 1998

“While the final election result will not be known for days, it is clear that the Coalition will have a working majority in the new Parliament. We stared down a fear campaign, and the Australian people came with us.

We now have a mandate to implement the policies that we took to the Australian people and we so honestly, openly and candidly laid before them. We have weathered the ferocious fear campaign and we have won the mandate of the people. I want to thank the Australian people for embracing a brave economic reform that is in the long-term interest of the Australian community.

Some declarations about political precedents have been made tonight. Let me make a declaration about political precedent. This is probably the first time in the recent experience of Western political parties that a party has successfully run an election championing such a major reform, which readily lends itself to such a dishonest fear campaign.

I am immensely proud of the fact that the Coalition stuck to its guns and the Australian people stayed with us. I want to commit myself and members of my Government once again to the service of the Australian people.

I want tonight to acknowledge with sadness the loss of a number of my colleagues who have been defeated. I want to thank them for their service to the Liberal Party and to the National Party.

I regard it as a privilege beyond belief to have been twice elected as Prime Minister of Australia. The Government you have elected tonight will be a government for all Australians; the Government you have elected tonight will dedicate itself to the welfare of all Australian people.

I want to dedicate my government to the maintenance of traditional Australian values (cheers) and they include those great values of mateship and egalitarianism, and that great Australian value of tolerance and of treating people decently and of not discriminating against people according to their race or ethnic background. (Cheers) We are a nation of many parts and many origins and we should never forget that and we should see that as a tremendous asset.

I want to commit myself, very genuinely, to the cause of true reconciliation with the Aboriginal people of Australia (Applause). We may differ and debate about the best way to achieve reconciliation but I think all Australians are united in a determination to achieve it.

I want to thank my treasurer and Liberal Deputy, Peter Costello. I also thank the Premier of Victoria, Jeff Kennett. (Cheers) And finally, can I express my love and gratitude to my magnificent family. (Cheers, applause and whistling) No father could be prouder than I am of my three children and I just want to say to Janette and Melanie, to Tim and Richard, I love you very deeply and I thank you for everything.”

Source: Compiled from the Sun-Herald, 4 October 1998, p. 3; the Sydney Morning Herald 5 October 1998, p. 3; and the Sunday Telegraph 4 October 1998, p. 2-3.