

Victory Speech: John Howard, Prime Minister (LP)

Sydney, November 10 2001

“Ladies and gentlemen, I first wish to address some remarks to all of my fellow Australians. I cannot express to you the sense of honour and privilege I feel in once again being elected as Prime Minister of the greatest country in the world.

My resolve, my commitment, my dedication is to the service of the Australian people in the years ahead. We face as a nation some new and unexpected challenges. All of us are deeply conscious of the changes that have come over the world and therefore over our own nation since the terrible events in the United States of the 11th of September. And it requires of all of us of good will and of faith in freedom and a belief in the great principles upon which this nation has been built that we come together, we behind together in unity, not only one with the other but also with like minded people around the world. Those terrible deeds were done to us as much as they were done to our American friends and we have a duty as part of the free world to respond to them.

I would like to thank Kim Beazley, the Leader of the Australian Labor Party, for his gracious words, he was kind enough to ring me earlier this evening, I thank him for that. I pay respect to him as an honourable political opponent. I wish him and his wife Susie and his family well and I record my respect for the contribution that he has made to his own party.

Can I say to all of the members and supporters of the Liberal Party of Australia what a wonderful result tonight is. Not only have we won for the third time but this is the greatest two-party preferred swing to an incumbent government since 1966.

You will all [unclear] and to grasp the scale of what our party have achieved we will remember the depths of political despair that many of us felt earlier this year and the long battle back began months ago. And those who will seek to record wrongly that we only began to recover late in August forget the great turning point of the Aston by-election, and the way in which our party and our National Party colleagues in Coalition responded to the concerns of the Australian people in many areas.

Can I record my gratitude to a number of people. I want to thank John Anderson the Leader of the National Party of Australia. There is no more decent man in the Federal Parliament and his understanding of the concerns of country Australia is something that I value very much.

I would also want to thank my colleague and friend the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party Peter Costello. For the stewardship he's displayed in relation to the Australian economy and the great contribution that he's made to our victory.

And to all of my Liberal Party colleagues, to all of those people, those men and women of Australia who have shared in this victory. And I know it's very dangerous

on an occasion like this but I do want to pay particular tribute to three people tonight. I think what Ross Cameron and Pat Farmer have achieved and can I also express my unbounded admiration for Ron Boswell of the Queensland National Party. Ron, I do think you are pretty effective.

So to all of my colleagues and our supporters, I particularly thank the leaders of the Liberal Party organisation, to Shane Stone and Lynton Crosby. Nobody could have had a more wonderful campaign director than I had in Lynton Crosby. Every day virtually of our waking existence for the last six months we have worked together and if it hadn't been for the superb organisation we would not have achieved this victory tonight. Lynton to you and your team I record my immense gratitude.

We have ahead of us some difficult and challenging years. But I know that the spirit of the Australian people will be equal to the task and to the challenge. There is something special about being an Australian. That's an expression I used on this very platform and this very hotel more than five and half years ago when the Coalition was returned to power in March of 1996. That Australian spirit, that capacity, that mateship that allows us to pull together in times of challenge and times of adversity that is something very special. It has always been part of my belief and my faith as an Australian that the things that unite us are infinitely greater and more enduring than the things that divide us.

We have had a difficult and on occasions, as always happens in an election campaign, a bruising political exchange. That is part of a democracy. It is not something that we should ever shrink from, it is not something that we should ever recoil from. It is part of the democratic system that people will passionately argue their points of view but once that battle is over, we all have a duty, each to the other to come together as part of the great Australian nation. We face some difficult days. They are different. They bring new challenges, both of an economic and of a political kind. But I have no doubt that the spirit of the Australian people will enable us to respond to all of those challenges and to all of those events.

And I want tonight, having received in a very humbling way the support of the Australian people once again. I want to dedicate my self and all of the members of my parliamentary team to the service from tomorrow morning onwards to the interests of the Australian people. There is no greater honour that can be conferred on anybody than the honour of being prime minister of this magnificent country and I commit myself and my being and all of the energy and all of the capacity I have to the service of my fellow Australians from this night onwards.

And finally there are two other groups of people I want to thank. I want to thank my personal staff. There is nothing more arduous, trying, stressful, testing of good humour and good temper than a political campaign. Political campaigning made all the more burdensome I guess by the ongoing responsibilities of government at a time of particular challenge and difficulty of our nation.

And can I extend to my personal staff, to Arthur Sinodinos my Chief of Staff and Tony Nutt my principal private secretary, to all of my members of staff, thank you from the bottom of my heart for the tremendous loyalty, support, professionalism, 24

hour dedication because you have been, as much as I have, a part of this great victory that we've won tonight.

And finally and very importantly, can I express my affection and my gratitude for my wonderful family. To Janette and to Melanie and to Richard, and if somehow or other you can hear me Tim, you are over in London, I think you are on your way to Twickenham to see the Wallabies beat England. When you get there have a pint for me and I'm sure you will. But to my family, to my extended family who are here tonight, thank you for all the support you have given me. You can't do this on your own, you really can't, and I have been blessed with a wonderful family and wonderful friends and they have sustained me and I feel so deeply grateful to them tonight.

And finally can I say again tonight to all my fellow Australians I feel an enormous sense of honour and privilege at what has been given to me tonight. I won't let you down. It is a great trust, it is a solemn trust and will discharge it to the very best of my ability. Thank you."

Source: Compiled from audio and Prime Minister's Website, www.pm.gov.au.