



PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

MARCH 1, 1976

TEXT OF ADDRESS BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT THE VICTORIAN CAMPAIGN

OPENING

The election in Victoria will decide how far a new era in Australian life can be realised.

At the Federal level, we have a Government whose major commitments are freedom, opportunity and concern. We have a commitment to giving Australians the opportunity to achieve their goals in life and a commitment to assisting the disadvantaged and asserting for Government a new role.

But the Federal Government is only one of Australia's Governments.

State Governments have a vital part to play if Australians are to have the maximum scope to develop their abilities.

There is only one party in Victoria that can offer a Government of idealism and responsibility required to make Australia an example to the world.

Only the Liberal Party can offer that kind of Government.

The Liberal Party of Australia places supreme value on the individual - on the right of people to seek their own goals in life, in their own way.

The purpose of Government is to provide the conditions in which all people can achieve lives of dignity and self-respect.

The philosophy of the Liberal Party is the only philosophy which can provide realistic responsible Government and progressive, enlightened reform.

The Liberal Party in Victoria has a record of great achievement in securing a decent life for all people.

The Victorian Liberal Government is one of the most successful Governments in Australia, with a record all Liberals can be proud of -- a record of twenty years sound and progressive Government first under Sir Henry Bolte, and then under Dick Hamer.

A victory for the Liberal Party in the election is crucial to all Victorians.

There must be no repetition of the disastrous unemployment and inflation created by the irresponsible policies of the Australian Labor Party.

All Australians want to ensure that that does not happen again.

But we cannot be content simply with establishing prosperity again. We must move forward in a progressive and enlightened direction - a direction which will enable people to control their own lives.

We believe that power must be shared - between the Commonwealth, and the States. Between State Government and Local Government, and within the broader community.

Labor will always fail because it believes that all Government power should be centralised in a few men, that Government should have ever greater control over the lives of everyone in every part of Australia.

Labor tried to destroy the States and centralise control over Local Government.

The Labor Party tried to destroy the Senate -- the very instrument the Constitution established to protect the States.

In the Labor Party's view, all wisdom resided in a few men in Canberra.

The people who are suffering the results of that view are the thousands of school leavers still trying to find jobs; the retired people whose savings have been eaten away by inflation; the poor and the disadvantaged whom inflation affects worst of all; and young families who suddenly found that the price of a home was beyond their reach.

While all this was happening, the Labor Party in Victoria said not a word. They did not protest at what was happening to Australia.

How far with Federal Labor is Mr Holding prepared to go?

Did he approve of the Labor Party's attempts to evade the constitution in the Loan's Affair?

What is his attitude to the latest episode in the sordid story of the Labor Party and Arab money?

The people of Victoria have a right to know just how far Mr Holding is prepared to go with Mr Whitlam.

Does he agree with Mr Whitlam's stated belief, that the duty of state Labor Parties is to make themselves unnecessary?

How can any self-respecting State Party Leader take this attitude and expect the voters to believe that he will work for their interest?

The left wing of the Labor Party has been too influential for too long and thousands of Australians are suffering as a result.

The Poverty Inquiry reported that the poor and the disadvantaged were actually worse off as a result of the inflation caused by Labor.

The Victorian Labor Party under Mr Holding was prepared to surrender the future of the people in Victoria to the irresponsibility of the Labor Party in Canberra.

The people who spoke out were Dick Hamer and the Victorian Liberal Party.

And they were not content just to protest - they did something about it.

Together with people in the Liberal Party around Australia, the Liberal Party in Victoria worked to develop a programme for the most fundamental reform of Australia's Federal system since Federation.

The Liberal Party's Federalism Policy will be the strongest guarantee that irresponsible attempts to centralise all power in the hands of a few men will never happen again.

When the Federalism Policy is implemented, the States - and Local Government - will have a guaranteed source of income. Participation by people in local and state government will be more effective. More important, decisions especially affecting local communities and the states will again be made where they should be made -- by the Government closest to the people affected.

That is one major reason why a victory for the Liberal Party is so important -- Victorians will know that the Government they elect will whole-heartedly work to bring about cooperation and responsibility in the Government of Australia.

Centralisation of power by a genuine concern that people should be able to participate effectively in the decisions of Government which affect them.

Just as the State Government needed a Party with a Liberal philosophy in Canberra, the Federal Government needs a Party with a Liberal philosophy in Victoria.

Then in partnership with the Australian people we can build a new Australia.

It is now my pleasure to introduce the Premier of Victoria - a man of humanity, a man of integrity - a man of whom Victorians and the Liberal Party are rightly proud - the man who has led one of the most successful State Governments in Australia - Dick Hamer.