



EMBARGO: CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

PRIME MINISTER

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ELECTORAL TALK

Next Saturday, Victorians cast votes to decide what kind of Government they want over the next three years.

This year the choice will be perhaps more crucial than it has ever been.

Australia is once again poised to take advantage of our great natural wealth. We are poised on the threshold of an era where every Australian has a decent chance to get down to the business of living a better standard of life.

But this will not happen if our national household budget is out of order. It will not happen if our economy is weak, listless and without real chance of growth.

At the moment, most of our efforts are aimed at reviving the economic corpse we inherited.

On this point let there be no doubt that for our economic management to work as effectively as it should, the national Government needs the support of all State Governments.

We are not just looking for token assistance - but for real interaction and encouragement at both ministerial and departmental level.

I know we will get just that support from Dick Hamer.

We also believe that State Governments have a crucial role to play if Australians are to be allowed to shape the course of their own lives, without interference from 'big brother'.

Today, Australians have a genuine choice in the kind of Government they want. They have genuine alternatives.

The choice is quite simple. It rests between the centralist socialist policy of Mr Whitlam's and Mr Holding's Party and the Federalist policy of the Liberal Party. In other words, it is a choice between more and more government control and dominance and less central Government control.

Labor believes that all Government power should be placed in the hands of a few men. They believe Government should have greater control over individuals lives. Labor has tried to destroy the role of the States and has even attempted to exercise central control over local governments.

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

On December 13 last, Australians categorically told Labor what they thought of these and other philosophies. Next Saturday, Victorians have the same opportunity.

During the recent campaign opening for Dick Hamer in Melbourne I said that 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.

Let me stress that point tonight. My Government is deeply committed to the principle that decisions affecting local towns, suburbs and cities must be made by the Government on the spot. Canberra should not meddle with power hungry hands where local knowledge and talents can do the job so much better.

Of course, what is needed here is not just a patch-up of the currently degenerated Federal system. We must create a political and social climate where the growing demands of groups and individuals can be heard. People must be able to participate - in a meaningful way - in the democratic process.

For these reasons, your vote next Saturday will count, it will have meaning.

Through the ballot box you can express your opinion as to the type of State Government you want. You can make a choice between two opposing philosophies. You can decide between more Government control or less Government control. You can opt for socialism. Or you can opt for a Party whose view of Government is that it should create a society and an environment where individuals may best fulfill themselves.
