



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP

JOHN HOWARD AND THE EASTON AFFAIR

There is no new evidence in Easton matter to warrant an expensive independent inquiry into Carmen Lawrence's involvement.

Dr Lawrence's account of the matter is far and away the most credible.

This matter boils down to the repetition of claims by one former minister - a former minister apparently intent upon doing Dr Lawrence damage.

For Mr Howard to engage in this shabby call for an inquiry so soon after his involvement in the Ian McLachlan affair is transparently hypocritical. He is seeking to use this matter in a bid to cover the gaping rift which now exists in the Western Australian Liberal Party.

Mr Howard would like to distract from what is now one of the central facts of Australian political life - that in one State of Australia the Liberal Party is completely and irrevocably divided.

The Government will not be playing Mr Howard's game by holding an inquiry into this matter.

If Mr Howard is interested in inquiries, he should run one into his own complicity in the squalid Ian McLachlan affair - the one from which he has so glibly slithered away.

CANBERRA
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