



PRIME MINISTER

91/95

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON PJ KEATING MP

MR HOWARD AND THE MARKS ROYAL COMMISSION

Mr Howard today made the extraordinary admission that he and Mr Court discussed the establishment of the Marks Royal Commission prior to Mr Court's public announcement that the Royal Commission would proceed.

In his ABC radio interview this morning, Mr Howard refused three times to answer direct questions as to whether he in fact urged Mr Court to set up the Royal Commission.

Mr Howard now has the chance to live up to his rhetoric about the need for absolute truth in politics. He can answer, truthfully and without prevarication or deceit, the following simple questions:

Did Mr Howard discuss the establishment of the Marks Royal Commission with Premier Court before its public announcement?

Did anyone acting on Mr Howard's behalf, especially the shadow attorney-general, discuss the setting up of the Marks Royal Commission with Premier Court or anyone acting on his behalf?

How many discussions took place, and when and where were they held?

Given the repeated claims by the Liberal Party that there is no political motive in the establishment of the Royal Commission; and the fact that the terms of reference relate to matters in the Western Australian Parliament, why did Mr Howard and/or his representatives discuss the establishment of the Royal Commission with Mr Court and/or his representatives?

Will Mr Howard adopt in his answers to these questions about his recollections of his discussion with Premier Court, the same standards of truth and directness that he claims to seek from Dr Lawrence and her recollections of Parliamentary events leading up to the tabling of the Easton petition?

CANBERRA
25 August 1995