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## **ACTING PRIME MINISTER**

**STATEMENT BY THE ACTING PRIME MINISTER, THE HON KIM BEAZLEY MP**

**AMANDA VANSTONE AND DR GOEBBELS**

It might have been hoped that Senator Vanstone would realise that her vilification of the Prime Minister by an extended, pseudo-scientific comparison with Goebbels, the infamous Nazi propaganda chief, anti-Semite and mass murderer was a serious error of judgement. Instead, she has chosen today to repeat her disgraceful attack.

Apart from its absurdity, Senator Vanstone's speech on Monday was deeply offensive to Australia's Jewish community because it had the effect of trivialising the unspeakable horrors of the Nazi era. She - and apparently John Howard, who has endorsed her behaviour - are unable to distinguish between the vigorous rough and tumble of Australian democratic life and the vicious, inhumane and genocidal politics of Nazi Germany.

Nothing could more clearly underline how desperately out of touch with reality the Liberals are, or how profoundly oblivious they are to the sensitivities of Australians. Senator Vanstone's behaviour is the more reprehensible for being so far from the balance, moderation and judgement which people have the right to expect in a Shadow Attorney-General.

Senator Vanstone's speech has deservedly brought condemnation from the Jewish community, which has asked her to acknowledge the offensiveness of her statements. Her response has been to repeat them.

I call upon Senator Vanstone to apologise for the deep offence she has caused to all Australians and in particular to those who were victims of Nazi atrocities.

11 January 1996