



**PRIME MINISTER**

7/96

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

**MR BURGESS AND MR HOWARD**

On the very day we celebrate our nationhood and social harmony, the National party candidate for Leichhardt has chosen to make remarks which are deeply offensive to the great majority of Australians and to the values by which we live.

His remarks are a particular insult to all those Australians who have ever attended a citizenship ceremony and all those who may be contemplating it. They make a racist mockery of Australian citizenship ceremonies and procedures and in doing so also mock the principle of tolerance on which modern Australia depends.

Mr Burgess would be a member of a coalition government and it is therefore Mr Howard's duty to disown these comments and call on Mr Burgess to withdraw and publicly apologise. Passing that responsibility to his Deputy, Mr Fischer, is an unacceptable response from a man who aspires to lead the government. If Mr Howard fails this test of leadership, Australians will have a right to wonder how loud a voice the likes of Mr Burgess would have in a Coalition government.

**CANBERRA  
26 JANUARY 1996**