



PRIME MINISTER

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, MP HOWARD FAILS THE TULLY-MILLSTREAM TEST

Earlier today I issued a challenge to Mr Howard to unequivocally rule out the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric project which will flood significant areas of World Heritage listed rainforest in the Wet Tropics World Heritage area.

Mr Howard has now failed this most fundamental test of his born-again green credentials. When asked by a journalist to respond to my challenge, Mr Howard refused to rule out the dam, saying:

"As far as the Tully-Millstream is concerned, I give you an undertaking, that we will ensure, in considering that proposal, all of the environmental concerns that ought to be taken into account will be taken into account and that it will not go ahead if it is going to do significant damage to the environment".

Mr Howard knows that this project cannot be built without significant damage to the environment, including to World Heritage values.

And yet he has refused to rule it out.

His response reveals the John Howard of old. The same John Howard who was implacably opposed to the use of Commonwealth powers to protect the Franklin River.

The only thing that has changed is John Howard's willingness to say what he really believes.

He has now proven conclusively that if elected, he will allow the fabric of environmental protection that Labor has put in place, in the national interest, over the past 13 years, to be torn apart.

John Howard will sit on his hands while the National Party and conservative State governments unravel years of work by Federal Labor and communities across Australia to protect our rich environmental heritage for the future.

Environmentally concerned voters should take the Tully-Millstream as a warning.

Don't trust John Howard on the environment.

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