

19 May 1974

PRIME MINISTER

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. E.G. WHITLAM, Q.C., M.P.

The electors of Australia have voted to support their Government.

Their voice has been partly muffled by the peculiarities of the electoral system. In New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia there are some electorates with an enrolment of only 50,000 and others with an enrolment of 80,000 or even more.

Nevertheless, some clear facts emerge.

The 126 Labor candidates won as many votes as the other 374 candidates combined.

The Government secured a higher percentage of votes on 18 May 1974 than on 2 December 1972. The combined Liberal, Country Party and D.L.P. vote was lower than in 1972.

The majority in favour of the Australian Labor Party over the coalition parties is far higher than that recorded in 1972.

Swings to the Government have been recorded in all the areas of greatest concentration of population.

In other words, the mandate of 1972 has been renewed in so far as the electoral system allows an accurate expression of the people's will.

If Australia is to have an effective and stable parliamentary democracy, then electorates must urgently be distributed to give a more accurate reflection of the wishes of the people.

It is important that it should be realised at home and abroad that whatever the position of the Government in the House of Representatives in terms of seats may be, its position in the nation is one of strong and continuing support.

CANBERRA, A.C.T.