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## PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No. 586  
30 October 1975

### THE BUDGET

The present constitutional crisis must be resolved, and it must be resolved quickly by the men who brought it about. There can no longer be any doubt that the Opposition's policy on blocking the Budget has been rejected by an overriding majority of the Australian people and, increasingly, by Opposition Senators themselves.

Many of you will have seen the results of the latest public polls. To put it simply, they are quite devastating. It is not my usual practice to comment on these polls, but it's interesting to remember that Mr Fraser has always placed great store by them. He justified the rejection of the Budget by claiming massive public support for his chosen course. That course has proved disastrous; it has failed; the latest polls have shown it. They reveal that 70 percent of the Australian people believe the Budget should be passed. Well over half the Australian people believe the Government should be allowed to govern.

This week we saw the final collapse of the long drawn-out and farcical Khemlani business - the so-called loans scandal. The Opposition itself has admitted that nothing in Mr Khemlani's documents - those eight mysterious suitcases - could justify the unprecedented course they have taken. We know now that Mr Fraser is relying on a handful of Opposition Senators who have publicly expressed their reservations - very grave reservations - about the rejection of the national Budget. Senator Bessell, a Liberal, has said firmly that he would never vote against the Budget, and he added - and I quote his words - "A good many others would feel the same way as I do." That is, a number of Opposition Senators, who have gone along with the deferral of the Budget, are now saying they would never reject it. That's the sort of backing Mr Fraser has for his present policy - doubts and fears among his own Senators, and overwhelming rejection by the Australian people.

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I have to say frankly that the Opposition's present tactics are perilous in the extreme. It is not my intention, it is not my desire, to provoke needless fear or alarm. But we must be quite clear about the consequences of what is happening. The continual refusal to pass the Budget - to give the elected Government the means to govern and maintain the essential services of the nation - is already damaging the business community, threatening the normal life of the nation, and endangering the whole delicate process of economic recovery. These are critical weeks and months in the nation's life. The decisions we take now - and above all the orderly working of our Budget strategy - may well determine our economic future, our prosperity and strength, for years to come. Every day that passes, every day the Budget is delayed, makes our task more hazardous and difficult. I have said before there can be no surrender on this issue; the fundamental principle of democracy is too important - for me, or for any future Prime Minister. On that I am absolutely determined. I ask my fellow-Australians to stand with me in defence of this principle, and whatever trials may come, to maintain as best they can the normal business of the nation. The Budget must pass. The Government must be allowed to govern. The economy and the nation must go forward.

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