



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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ELECTORATE TALK

Now that the Federal election results have been finalised, Australia's 32nd Parliament will assemble next Tuesday for its official opening by the Governor General.

The constitution requires that after any general election, the Parliament will be summoned to meet not later than 30 days after the day appointed for the return of the writs. However, apart from this constitutional requirement, it was the Government's view that a Parliamentary sitting before Christmas would provide an opportunity for us to get on with the job.

Because the Australian people once again returned my Government with a substantial majority, we are naturally keen to implement those commitments which were outlined in my election policy speech as soon as possible.

An important priority of course is to continue the fight against inflation. It remains our belief that an improvement in economic growth is the most effective way to reduce unemployment.

An important priority of the Government as we enter another term of office is assistance to Australia's youth, especially those who are having difficulty finding a job. We have a very real desire to enable youth to articulate its concerns, and to take note of that voice. We are also expressing our commitment to youth through our educational initiatives for those who are about to leave school and are seeking to join the work force. It is a difficult time for all young people, and we firmly believe that all possible assistance must be given to educate our young people for the future. After all, Australia's future lies in the hands of the young men and women of today. Attention is being directed in particular to those whose orientation is less academic and who may leave school early. With this in mind, we have introduced the School-to-Work Transition programme with a Commonwealth commitment of \$150 million over the next five years. Young people are being offered a range of options in education and training as real, meaningful alternatives to the academic stream, and the Government has further boosted its efforts to assist young people in making the important step from school to work by announcing a new transition allowance.

Yet these education and transition initiatives do not exist in a vacuum. Preparation for work must be followed by the opportunity to work. Another direction of our commitment to youth is ensuring that young people are given the opportunity to gain employment, both through our broad economic strategy and through training and manpower programmes. Our economic policies have already led to a gratifying growth in employment over the past year, and will lead to further improvements in the future. Our policies have played an important part in providing an increase of over 200,000 jobs over the last year including almost 40,000 jobs for teenagers.

We are also taking steps to ensure that young people are properly equipped to take advantage of the job opportunities which are in fact opening up. In 1980-81, our manpower, training and special youth programmes will help over 220,000 young Australians. We have set aside over \$100 million for this assistance which includes subsidies under CRAFT and the Special Youth Employment Training Programme and assistance under the Community Youth Support Scheme.

The encouragement given to young people to become involved in community service, to retain their work orientation and to develop skills for the future underlines the real contribution that they can make to Australian society.

The Government considers that the election provides us with a mandate to continue the basic policies which we have developed and implemented over the past five years. It is our firm belief that economic and social progress can only be achieved on the basis of a firm confidence, both within Australia and overseas, that the Government of Australia will adopt and pursue stable, sensible and reliable policies and will always act in a responsible manner. We will show again that we are worthy of that confidence by demonstrating a firm resolve to get on with the job.

Many of us when we gather for the new Parliament, will be saddened by the death of a very great Australian and a great Parliamentarian, Sir John McEwen, who died last Thursday. It is difficult to know where to begin to praise someone like the late Sir John. There are many facets of his career which deserve particular mention. I think if I had to single out one, it would be his dedication to all Australians

Although he was a member of the Country Party, he did represent all Australians, not only the rural parts of this country. His career in this Parliament as a Member of the House of Representatives for an unbroken period of 37 years, during which time he served as a Minister of State for 26 of them, including a short period as Prime Minister, is unequalled.

His interest in all things Australian brought about a great increase in manufacturing industry which enabled us to become more self reliant. During his period as Minister in Charge of Manufacturing Industry, there was a great growth in that industry. Some might have thought that there is an odd irony in that, that as Country Party Leader, that was one of his very great achievements. It just shows that he was prepared to govern and adopt policies for all Australians.

As I have said previously, Sir John McEwen was a great Australian, and a very great Australian leader. I was honoured and privileged to serve in the Parliament with him, and to serve in government with him. In addition, he was a great friend.

My Government and I grieve deeply for him, and our sympathy goes to his widow, Lady Mary McEwen.

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