



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

SUNDAY, 6 MARCH 1983

A FINAL MESSAGE TO AUSTRALIANS

I congratulate Mr Hawke and the Australian Labor Party on winning the election.

Mr Hawke has set a number of high goals for Australia in a time of great economic difficulty around the world. If he and his party can fulfil the expectations presented to the electorate then Australia will be advantaged.

Whatever our problems, Australia has been handed to Mr Hawke's new government in a condition that is equal to or better than any other Western country.

Last night I resigned from the leadership of the Parliamentary Liberal Party. I reaffirm that I will not contest the leadership of the Party.

I have taken complete responsibility for the timing and conduct of the election, and therefore have taken complete responsibility for the defeat of the Coalition Government.

After a little over seven years as Prime Minister there are many people I would wish to thank. I cannot name them all here. But I wish to place on record my deep appreciation for the commitment and effort by Doug Anthony, my Cabinet, my Ministry and the entire Parliamentary Party to the good government of Australia. I wish to place on record also my thanks to my personal staff, my Department, and party members throughout Australia for their unceasing support. To the electors of Wannon, I also thank them for their loyalty and overwhelming support.

It has been a great honour and privilege to have been Prime Minister of Australia.

During the election I said that what happened to Malcolm Fraser as an individual was of no account. I meant that. But what happens to Australia, to our way of life and to the kind of country we leave our children is of great and lasting significance.

The values and principles by which we live, the human relationships which guide us, and the values to which we aspire as Liberals will not change.

I urge Liberals everywhere to keep the faith.