



PRIME MINISTER

For Media

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The Government , of course , would have liked to have won the Bruce by-election.

However , the Australian Labor Party has never won the seat since its creation in 1955.

A number of other factors , including the lack of any measurable personal vote for Sir Billy Snedden , the Liberal candidate holding first place on the ballot paper and the traditional anti-Government swing in by-elections combined to influence the result.

Some comment has been made on the impact of the Economic Statement brought down by the Treasurer on May 19.

It should be noted that the Statement was framed on the basis that Australia needs a Government prepared , where necessary , to take hard decisions.

If the short-term impact of the Statement , which has been widely acclaimed as responsible and necessary , is some political unpopularity then the Government will have to accept that.

But as I said at the opening of the Bruce by-election campaign it would have been very simple for the Government to hold off on the Statement in the hope of securing some political advantage.

The interests of Australia , and particularly the many thousands without jobs , would not have been best served by such a cynical approach.

Finally , I would like to pay tribute to the hard work and commitment of the ALP candidate , Heather O'Connor , and the campaign team.