



PRIME MINISTER

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

EMBARGOED UNTIL 1 P.M.

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
LAUNCHING THE MORETON BY-ELECTION CAMPAIGN
BRISBANE - 26 OCTOBER 1983

I am delighted to be back in Brisbane to launch Labor's campaign for the Moreton By-election.

It is less than 8 months since the people of Australia elected a Federal Labor Government.

We were elected:

- to arrest the economic decline and then restore growth
- to reverse the trend towards greater inequality
- to bring Australians together

We are meeting those commitments.

We promised to convene a National Economic Summit Conference of unions, employers and governments to lay the basis for co-operative solutions to Australia's economic problems.

We have done that.

We promised to establish an Economic Planning Advisory Council to provide, for the first time, an integrated basis for consistent, long-term economic planning.

We have done that.

We promised to establish a Community Employment Program to directly create jobs, particularly for the long-term unemployed.

We have done that.

We promised to introduce a First Home Ownership Assistance Scheme to enable lower income families to buy their own home.

We have done that.

In fact the housing grant we are providing - \$7,000 - is a full \$2,000 above what we promised.

We promised to put in hand arrangements for the introduction of Medicare - a simple, universal, equitable health care system.

We have done that.

We promised to increase education allowances and to distribute education resources more equitably.

We have done that.

We promised to introduce legislation to outlaw discrimination against women.

We have done that.

We promised to arrest the decline in employment that was occurring under the previous Government.

We have done that.

We promised to create 500,000 jobs in our first 3 years of government.

We are on target.

No Government has moved so quickly to meet so many of its election commitments as this Government.

We are keeping our promises.

There is one promise that is perhaps more important for the livelihood of Australians than any other.

That is our promise to restore economic growth.

Within 12 months we will have implemented that commitment.

During the last financial year - for which the previous Government was responsible - there was negative economic growth.

Real non-farm product fell by 2 per cent through the course of the financial year.

During this financial year there will be a dramatic improvement.

No longer will there be negative growth.

Instead, growth in real non-farm product is expected to be at least 5 to 6 per cent over the course of this financial year.

This is the largest turnaround in Australia's economic growth performance since the Second World War.

This growth forecast is not the Government's forecast.

It is the forecast of the Government's official advisers in the Treasury and the Reserve Bank - disinterested parties with no axe to grind for this Government.

They say: within 12 months Australia will be back on the economic growth path.

This would not have occurred without the Federal Labor Government's economic policies.

We are turning the economy round.

We are putting Australia back on the path of long-term economic growth.

This return to sustained economic growth will be central to achieving so many of the aspirations of Australians in the 1980's and 1990's.

Growth will create jobs for Australians young and old and take people off the unemployment queues.

Growth will finance increases in pensions and social security benefits.

Growth will make it possible for governments to ease the burden of taxation.

Growth will mean an expanding cake so that workers and employers don't have to turn on each other to meet their aspirations.

Growth will mean rising productivity so that the living standards of wage and salary earners can rise without fuelling inflation.

We promised to restore economic growth.

We have made that promise a cornerstone of our economic policy.

We are keeping that promise.

The Labor Party is the Party of economic growth.

A Labor vote in Moreton is a vote for growth, for expansion, for development, for the future.

The Liberal Party is the Party of stagnation, of depression.

For seven years the Liberals inflicted their Depression economics on Australia.

For seven years the enormous potential of Australia was squandered.

For seven years Australia lived in the past.

Of course we have not been able to move on all our promises as quickly as we would like.

A case in point is our commitment to lower personal taxation.

The reason for the delay is simple - the deception of the previous Government.

Within 24 hours of coming to office we were told by our officials that the prospective Budget deficit was \$9.6 billion - not the \$6 billion the previous Government told the Australian people it would be.

That was their legacy - a \$9.6 billion deficit - John Howard's poisoned chalice passed on to us.

Mr Fraser, Mr Peacock and Mr Howard grossly deceived the Australian people about the size of the deficit.

When we discovered that deception we had no choice as a responsible Government - we had to delay the taxation changes we had proposed.

It has taken the Federal Labor Government to implement policies to get Australia moving, to meet the challenge of economic growth head-on.

- A Government of unity, of strength, of purpose
- A Government that will allow Australians to plan and build for the future with confidence.

Under Labor's policies the first signs of the economic recovery have emerged.

We have already turned round the housing industry.

We have created 80,000 new jobs since April.

Confidence is returning to the business community.

Confidence is returning to Australia.

Meanwhile the Liberals have learnt nothing from the events of March 5.

They are confused.

They are divided.

They are leaderless.

They are a shambles.

They need to be told in the clearest terms that they will not even be considered for government while they lack unity, while they lack policies, while they lack any semblance of a vision for Australia.

The Liberals' much-vaunted Valder Report exalts them to aggressively present Liberal philosophies and "win the intellectual debate".

Their problem, however, is that they are deeply divided on basic policy questions and are in no position to even carry on a debate let alone win one.

These divisions have prevented the Liberals from adopting any coherent policy on such fundamentally important issues as the wages policy appropriate for Australia today.

If there is one lesson that is devastatingly clear from the Queensland election it is this.

The people of Australia do not want in government political parties that are divided among themselves.

The Liberal Party in Queensland is split down the middle.

The Liberal Party federally is also deeply divided.

That is just not good enough.

The Liberals' stand on tax avoidance is a scandal.

Their recent rejection in the Senate of the Government's tax recoupment legislation shows breathtakingly their duplicity and double standards.

The effect of their action is to protect the tax avoiders and rip-off merchants of this country

- to the tune of \$60 million this financial year and \$270 million in aggregate

That is Andrew Peacock's bill to the ordinary, law-abiding taxpayers of Australia.

These funds lost by the Liberals are equivalent to 7,000 new jobs under the Community Employment Program.

These funds would have enabled a one per cent reduction in personal income tax for every taxpayer.

Instead the Liberals have handed the money straight back to the tax avoiders of Australia.

I know there has been a degree of concern among pensioners about the Government's proposal to reintroduce an assets test on pensions.

There is no need for this concern.

The great bulk of pensioners - more than 80 per cent - will not be adversely affected at all.

In addition, the Government is at present carefully reviewing the proposed arrangements.

We are looking at possible anomalies and other concerns that have been brought to our notice.

The Social Security Minister, Senator Grimes, is having extensive consultations with pensioner organizations.

If we find changes are needed, changes will be made.

We want to make the assets test as fair and equitable as we possibly can.

And we want to protect the position of the vast majority of pensioners who are not wealthy and are not exploiting the system.

There has also been a degree of unwarranted concern about the taxation of superannuation lump sums.

The new measures will be phased in very gradually.

Particularly low rates will apply for at least the first 10 years and quite modest rates over the long-term.

The return of an employee's own superannuation contributions is to be wholly tax exempt.

And even that part which attracts tax is to incur a concessional rate of 15 per cent on the first \$50,000 with a tax rate of 30 per cent thereafter.

The Government introduced these measures because only a minority of the workforce have been able to take the special and excessive tax benefits applying to lump sums.

By commencing these measures now the Government is ensuring a fair and secure retirement can be afforded for all members of our rapidly growing elderly population.

Here in Moreton Labor has an outstanding candidate.

Barbara Robson has stood for Moreton three times - in 1977, 1980 and 1983.

Each time she has improved Labor's vote.

Last time she almost won.

This time she will win.

There are already six Labor women in the House of Representatives.

She will make it seven.

Barbara is known as the shadow Member for Moreton.

She has earned that title through strenuous efforts to sort out people's problems - housing, social security, immigration, education.

Barbara's ties with Moreton date back to her school days at Cavendish Road High School.

She taught for many years at schools in Moreton.

She likes challenges and helping people.

Her opponent has already collected a very generous parliamentary lump sum superannuation payout - \$276,000.

Now he wants another go.

Mr Cameron has no commitment whatsoever to the electorate of Moreton.

He has already converted two Federal electorates into Labor seats.

He won't get another chance.

Barbara Robson has worked tirelessly in Moreton.

She has earned the seat of Moreton.

She deserves the seat of Moreton.

On November 5 she will be - the Member for Moreton.
