



PRIME MINISTER

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP

DR HEWSON ATTEMPTS TO CON MIDDLE AUSTRALIA

Last night Dr Hewson attempted perhaps the most profound deceit so far in his campaign to win office. In debating health care, he said the following:

OK, so you have to make a decision as to where you cut off and at what point it is appropriate for people to start to take out private insurance. We made the decision at \$40,000 for a single and \$50,000 for a couple on the grounds that at those income levels they are getting very large tax cuts and if they have got kids they are getting a doubling or a whatever their income level is, they are either getting a doubling or a 50 per cent increase in family allowances. We've got a lot of money targeted into the system, but to make the system work you've got to get people to take out private insurance. He should be required to take it out and so should all the wealthy.

In truth, Fightback says that under Dr Hewson's so-called "plan" families with an income of \$40-55,000 will receive an increase in their Family Allowance of 6 per cent. Families with a total income of \$55,000 or above will have their Family Allowance abolished. Not doubled or increased by 50 per cent as Dr Hewson said, but increased by just 6 per cent or abolished altogether.

Only 15 per cent of families will have their Family Allowance doubled under Dr Hewson's plan. 100,000 families will lose the allowance.

Dr Hewson appears to believe that families with a household income of \$55,000 are wealthy. They will be forced into private health insurance or pay a penalty of \$800 per annum. They will lose the Family Allowance. And they will pay a 15 per cent GST.

Families in this middle income bracket would be significantly worse off under the Coalition's so-called "plan".

It is a perfect example of the way in which their GST package will attack Australian living standards and our way of life - and Dr Hewson's remarks last night are a perfect example of the lengths they will go to in their efforts to disguise this fact.

Dr Hewson says he has a plan. It is the wrong plan. It is not the plan he says it is. Everything Dr Hewson says should be checked against the reality of his intentions - most of which can be found in Fightback Mark I.

SYDNEY
8 March 1993