



PRIME MINISTER

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

THE HON JOHN DAWKINS MP

I congratulate John Dawkins on his courageous personal decision to relinquish the post of Federal Treasurer to return to the backbench, with a view to eventually retiring from Parliament before the next election.

I am, of course, saddened at the departure from the Cabinet of a friend and colleague of such distinction, passion and ability.

As I said in the Parliament tonight, in John Dawkins we saw the Cabinet Minister's role performed *par excellence*.

John Dawkins has had a highly significant ministerial career, spanning about 11 years. Among his many achievements, his spearheading of the formation of the Cairns Group of agricultural trading nations stands out as a major contribution to public life in national and international terms.

He has, of course, achieved many other things in public life in Australia, in a range of Ministries. He will be remembered for reforms to public sector management; his transformation of the tertiary education system; and his tireless work on the Government's Expenditure Review Committee. Most recently and particularly as Treasurer, he has played a significant role in the reformation of Australia's economy for a new, outward looking and competitive era.

He has been one of the great reformers within the Labor Government.

He leaves the office of Treasurer with Australia growing strongly; with inflation beaten; and with economic indicators pointing inexorably towards a strong recovery and new prosperity for Australians.

I salute John Dawkins and congratulate him on the grace and style with which he reached and announced this important personal decision. I extend my best and warmest wishes for the future to him, to his wife Maggie, and to their family including their newborn baby girl, Alice Esther.

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