



## PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF DOORSTOP INTERVIEW WITH THE PRIME MINISTER THE  
HON. P.J. KEATING, MP**

**KIRRIBILLI HOUSE, SYDNEY, SUNDAY JANUARY 30 - WERRIWA BY-  
ELECTION**

**E&OE PROOF ONLY**

**PM:** Do you want a comment on the by-election? It was a very standard by-election result, a sort of "as you were" result, a six per cent swing against the government is at the bottom range of par for the course for by-elections. A couple of years ago when we had by-elections in Adelaide and Oxley when Mr Howard was leader of the Liberal Party the swings were double digit swings, 10 per cent, that sort of order. I think the difference between me and Dr Hewson on this by-election in Werriwa is that his party will be very unhappy with result today and mine is very happy and I congratulate Mark Latham on a campaign well fought and I think as a result of this you will hear the knives sharpening in the Liberal Party, you will see a very desperate Dr Hewson jump out of the boxes at Question Time this week. Telecom would have had a great fillip this morning from the calls in the Parliamentary Liberal Party saying, well there it is, this fellow has not won one political contest since he's been Leader of the Opposition, not a general election and not even a decent swing in a by-election. So if you hear the clattering, you'll know what it is, it's the sharpeners at work.

**J:** You mentioned Mr Howard, does that mean you're pushing John Howard...

**PM:** No, no. They're the only things to compare against, simply to compare against the by-elections which were on a couple of years ago in Oxley, in Brisbane where the swings were the order of 10 per cent. Six per cent against the Government is a standstill result in a by-election and if the Liberal Party is looking for any comfort, if Dr Hewson's looking for any endorsement from this he is really, I think, sadly mistaken. I'll

bet if there is any sort of frequency counter inside Telecom, or Optus indeed, today, you can bet the Liberal Party's frontbench has really sent it up on the scale this morning.

J: When you say a standstill result, does that mean the Labor Party is content to stand still at the moment as far as the electorate is concerned?

PM: It means the electorate is basically continuing to support the Government and the opportunity that any group of constituents have to express an opinion in a by-election, well they have to the order of six per cent. It's a good result for us. Thankyou very much.

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