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## PRIME MINISTER

### STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP MR PACKER, MR HOWARD AND MEDIA MONOPOLIES

My attention has been drawn to a statement issued by Mr Kerry Packer, in which he has categorically denied any deal with Mr Howard on cross media ownership rules.

Well, of course he would.

The truth is that Mr Howard stands for the relaxation of rules which would allow Mr Packer to control a television network and major metropolitan newspapers in the same city. And he has said so. His statements have provided irrefutable evidence of the position he has taken, and would take in office.

Mr Howard has stated that his public and private views on this matter are the same. His public view is that the cross media ownership rules are unnecessary. He has expressed the same view privately to media proprietors, including Kerry Packer.

Whether he expresses it publicly or privately, Mr Howard's view is jarringly at odds with his Party's policy - and with the public interest.

As I said on Sunday, the Australian public will judge who is the Packer candidate - regardless of Mr Howard's coyness, or Mr Packer's bizarre pretence that he is being intimidated.

The Labor Government stands for media diversity, and the Coalition - under John Howard - does not.

I will be spending the next five days in Germany - the world's third largest economy - promoting Australia's role as a modern economy at the forefront of information technology use and development.

Among the things I will be saying to German business people and others is that this technology must be used to increase diversity, opportunity and equality. It is a point which both Mr Howard and Mr Packer should note.

BONN  
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