



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING MP
SPEECH AT BOX HILL TOWN HALL, MELBOURNE, 27 OCTOBER 1995**

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Thank you very much for that very generous and enthusiastic welcome. Helen (Mayer), Tony and Sandy (Robinson), my parliamentary colleague John (Thwaites), Kelvin (Thomson) and any others who may be with us today from the Victorian Labor Party, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen and boys and girls.

It is great of you to come along and to support Tony and the Party in the battle for Chisholm and to focus some of the public issues that are now in the current debate as the Coalition tries to remake itself.

So much of the last decade of our politics has actually swum around Box Hill. This was the site of John Howard's 'Little Big Horn' in 1987. This is the place where he had his last stand and, of course, he went down with that taxation and health policy of his and as a consequence we have seen Labor win two subsequent elections. We won 1987 and we won it, really, here in Box Hill in 1987 and, of course, that gave us a chance to win 1990 and 1993 and it has given the country the chance to grow and change itself and adapt itself into one of the fairest societies in the world. That would not have been the case if Mr Howard's miserable conservative message, which he launched here in Box Hill in 1987 had of had the support of the Australian public.

But, the thing about the Torries is that they never change. It wouldn't matter whether it was John Howard in 1987 or John Howard in 1995 or Stanley Melbourne Bruce in 1921. It wouldn't matter, it is always the same message. I have often said and I quote Manning Clarke's words about Australians dividing themselves into two categories. The enlargers of Australian life and the punishers and the straighteners. The people have belief and faith in Australians, who believe in themselves and know they can do good things together and enlarge and make the place bigger and greater and better and those who say

'keep your place, keep your eyes to the ground, be happy with what you have got, know your place', the punishers and the straighteners. And, of course, Mr Howard belongs to the punishing and straightening camp and so, of course, does Mr Kennett.

Nothing has ever changed with them even though nearly one hundred years on from our Federation, with all the bounty and wealth that the country has, they still have the same miserable view that they have had right throughout the century and when, of course, speaking now as we do about industrial relations and health being two of the principle issues, these are the issues that they have been on.

John Howard is now trying to remake himself. All of the things which he has said and done throughout his record of public life he is now trying to disown – roll himself up into a very small ball and say 'just look at the Government, don't look at me and don't dare repeat what I have ever stood for in the past, because if you do I will call you a liar' – and that is what he does. We say of Mr Howard, 'you have always been in favour of cuts to real wages, you have opposed every wage increase bar one since 1978'. 'Lie' he says 'lie'. So, you have always been opposed to Medicare? Lie. This is his technique now, to try to paint himself to be something that he isn't. But we have got to remember that 16 of the 19 members of his front bench are the same people who put Fightback together just three years ago. The same people who want to throw the unemployed off benefits after nine months. The same people who wanted a GST. The same people who wanted to cut \$10,000 million – \$10 billion – out of government spending and mostly in the social wage. The same people who wanted young people working for \$3.00 per hour. Sixteen of the nineteen of them are still there. The so called new 'group' as he puts it.

He got asked the other day on an Adelaide radio station '... Mr Howard what do you think will be the big issue in the next election?' He said and he now has this Menzian tone about him, he says sagely *'well, I think the real issue of the next election is that a new group will come to run Australia. A new group will come to lead Australia and that is what, I think, the issue is going to be'*. Apparently, it is now on a rotational basis. They have had five turns, it is now our turn. It is like when Andrew Peacock was around. Andrew got two turns so he wanted two turns. I said 'oh, the new group', the new Prime Minister perhaps, John Howard, he is very new. Or the new Deputy Prime Minister Mr Fischer. Who when asked on Lateline two weeks ago when quizzed about their lack of policies and asked by Kerry O'Brien for some definition of what their policy prescription said, he said '... we have got a number of policies out there, we have got a policy out there on the black spots program' he said. That was the first thing he mentioned, the black spots program on the roads. This was his reason for a change of national government. And the, of course, we have got the very new Shadow Treasurer

or the very new Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Downer. So, these are the things that they are saying.

We are now focussing on their industrial relations policies and we are focussing on their health policies. Given the battle at the Little Big Horn here in 1987 I just thought I would go back and just repeat from a transcript which was done a few days before the election on 1 June 1987 by Mr Howard on the John Laws program in Sydney. Mr Laws asked him about whether there would be reductions coming from for lower personal tax, he said '... well, they will be very major reductions. In health, the Medicare system is a total disaster. We will be proposing changes to Medicare that will amount to its de facto dismantling. We will put it right apart. The second thing we will do is get rid of the bulk billing system, it is an absolute rort.' So the questioner Mr Laws says '... so really what you are saying is what you will do is take us back to how things were pre-Medicare?' John Howard says 'As best we can, yes, recognising that in a society you never go completely back, but I would love to go back.'

You see now, there it is. But now we are supposed to say 'oh you are a believer in Medicare are you John?. You are going out there kidding everybody that you are going to keep it while you want to put \$1 billion into private health?' And he says 'yes'. We say 'but look, your record is that you have opposed bulk billing twice in the Parliament. That in 1993 you actually wanted to dismantle Medicare as part of the Fightback policy. In 1987 you had these things to say about it. Really, you are intending, if you get into office, to dismantle Medicare and twisting the system back to private health.' He says 'lie'.

The thing about politicians, there is a lot of poor commentary in this country about politicians because some people in the media think that they don't have convictions. Politicians do have convictions. They have beliefs and mostly you show me anyone 55 years of age, who has been in public life for 30 years, who has a long track record of views and I'll show you somebody who is basically going to stick to their views. Just as I have a conviction about opening this country up, making it internationally competitive, making it fair and equitable, making the leap into Asia, giving us an identity, having an Australian republic, these are things I believe in. I am not going to change. John Howard is not going to change either, but he expects us to believe that he has had a Paulian conversion someway between the Fightback election and now. He is now in favour of Medicare. He is in favour of award wages, he is in favour of all these when we know, in fact, he is not. It is like seeing a man in a balaclava crouched in your rhododendrons with a crowbar and a bag. And you would say 'excuse me, would I be right in inferring that you have sinister intentions?' And he says 'liar'. You say 'but look, we have seen your record' and he says 'it is a scare campaign' to which we are supposed to say 'oh look, I'm terribly sorry I won't disturb you any further. I'll go off to Bridge for the afternoon'.

What do they think it is? Do they really think we are that stupid? Do they think the whole community while he hides his policy is so silly as to accept his bland, now, support for Medicare? He will tear Medicare to pieces. He will rip it apart. He will rip public health apart because he has no respect and they never have had any respect for public health. Much of this election is going to be about the sort of society we are. The sort of society we have become. The things that we regard as community norms and we in the Labor Party have always believed that one of the things which is a community right is public health. The health of our citizens, the right to treatment, the right to have a healthy existence, that it is not a right defined by your income. That is what we believe and we have always believed in that. They have always believed in private health. They have always believed in support for doctors. They believe in now kicking another \$1 billion into private health through tax rebates which will go to the incomes of specialists and private hospitals and to private funds.

Yesterday I told the Parliament that private funds have now got \$1.35 billion in reserves. Yet, they have stuck up premiums for private health by 40 per cent in the last year. They have got \$1.3 billion in reserves, yet John Howard wants to give them another \$1 billion by way of tax rebates for private health insurance where in fact what he should be doing is putting the money into the public health system.

In the last year the Commonwealth has put \$800 million into the public health system and the States have taken \$700 million from it. In Victoria here Jeff Kennett has taken \$260 million out of public hospitals. That is where they stand. All around the country coalition governments are taking money out of public health. Does Mr Howard admonish them? Did he say to Jeff Kennett you are wrong? Did he say to Dean Brown you are wrong? Did he say to Ray Groom you are wrong? Or to Richard Court? No. He supports all that. Let me just repeat something he said in that same interview about health. John Laws said to him '... you must be fairly happy that Bruce Shephard is the newly elected President of the AMA in NSW pledge to destroy Medicare?' Howard says 'well, it does, I have a lot of time for Bruce. I think he is a very courageous man, both in the personal sense and professional sense.' Laws says '... will the AMA be better off?' Howard '... yes, I think, the AMA will more aggressively represent the interests of free enterprise medicine.' What is free enterprise medicine? What is free enterprise about the health of the community, but this is their view and they are ripping money out of the system all around the country.

Jeff Kennett is now thinking of privatising the ambulance service. Now, I know some ambulance officers are here with us today and I heard that story in Ballarat the day before yesterday. Where somebody died because when they called, instead of getting a response in eight minutes it took 55 minutes because no one was there. Is the state of Victoria so lacking in moral fibre and so poor that it

can't run an ambulance service? Are things so crook that Jeff Kennett has got to put locks and chains on public toilets on railway stations?

I mean, is that what it has come to under the Liberal Party? I mean, is that what we are all about in 1995, when the All Ordinaries Index is at 2150? It was under 500 ten years ago – a four-fold increase in the wealth of the stock market, a huge multiples of our national GDP in ten years. And what is it about? Some sort of miserable, public accountancy view that, you know, we get the books back into surplus by putting chains on railway station toilets, or privatising the ambulance service, or – in John Howard's case – knocking over Medicare and bulk billing and driving everybody back to private practice to give the specialists the incomes they think they deserve. I mean, that's what they're about. So, when John Howard says he supports Medicare, don't believe him. When John Howard says he is going to keep Medicare, say what you will do John is you will bust open bulk billing. It will go. The whole notion of public health and universal access will go if there is a Liberal Government, as sure as I'm standing here – it will go if there is a Liberal government. So, when he does his chameleon act, and tries to repaint himself, we just need to go back to those quotations on the John Laws program: "We will be proposing changes to Medicare that amount to its de-fact dismantling – we will pull it right apart. The second thing we will do is get rid of the bulk billing system – it's an absolute rort." So you're really saying you will take us back? "Yes. Recognise in society that you never go completely back, but I would love to go back". And that's where he stands – that is what he has always though. That's how he has always voted, and that's what he will always do.

Now, the same goes for industrial relations. Industrial relations – they are now saying that we are mis-representing them, that we are liars, and everything else. And this is the response they have given, and they expect journalists to run it, and repeat naively "oh well, the Opposition says they won't have that – that's not true". We say well hang on, if you have got any guile about you at all? I mean, is there any scepticism left in journalism in this country? I mean, this is what they have always done and said – why would you think they would change now? Just simply for the convenience of an election. But what they say on industrial relations, what we say, is we want a more flexible labour market. We want enterprise bargaining where people can trade away certain things for greater benefits, and make the working of the business more flexible, in hours in the sort of rosters, in some of the penalty rates and overtime rates, but we have an important element in our policy. We have a thing called the "no-disadvantage test". And those agreements have got to go past the arbitration commission, and they look at them and tick them to see that there is no disadvantage from the totality of the new package to the employee. So, under our policy you can have flexibility up, you can flexibility sideways, but you can't have flexibility down. There is a no-disadvantage test. But the Liberals won't endorse the no-disadvantage test, because they want cuts in the wages of Australians down.

They want the last two or three deciles of the income of the labour market to be subject to reductions. And you can see it here in Victoria, and we have allowed many State registered unions to register themselves under the Federal jurisdiction, so as to escape these sorts of individual contracts offered by the Kennett Government. Now, Jeff Kennett told a business audience at the Business Council last week when the Federal Libs get into office, the employees will have nowhere to go. The employees will have nowhere to go – they will be trapped. Trapped. In other words, his model, has employees running around trying to get wage justice as the sort of Federal legislation, and the State legislation, closes in on them. And it really matters, because yesterday on the ABC, Mr Reith was asked pointedly and repeatedly – "but can you guarantee that there will be no reductions in the pay of people if they actually agree to an individual contract in the terms you say?". And he said, "we have always believed in good wages" etc etc, but the journalist came back and said can you guarantee that no-one will be worse off? And he said "we will be trying to do our best in all the circumstances". In other words, no guarantee. Because what they're about is basically flexibility down. What John Howard has always been about is cuts to lower and middle income earners.

As if the economy isn't strong enough. I mean, we have had 670,000 job growth in the last 2.5 years. We have got the profit share – and that is the share of national income going to profits – almost without any historic precedence, in terms of its height. It's why the stock market is so buoyant. We have had quite strong productivity. We have had the lowest level now – this year – of industrial disputes since 1940. This year, we had 70 working days lost per thousand employees. In John Howard's period of office, it was 590 working days lost per thousand employees. So, if it's not industrial disputes, and it's not productivity, and it's not the inflation rate, it's not profits, what is it? Why do they want to hop into working class incomes? And it's because they are spiteful and nasty – that's all. But that's all it is. Basically, they are ideologically arraigned against the great majority of the working community. They want to, basically, push them down – the old punishing and straitening point. And you see, don't take my word for it – read what Reith said yesterday: "Can you guarantee Mr Reith, that people won't be worse off", "We'll do our best in all the circumstances", he said. In other words, no guarantee. Now, you can see all of this coming out of this issue, and it's what I said earlier – what sort of society we are. Because industrial relations is about more than just pay-rates, and classifications and awards, it's about the sort of country we are. That sort of basic community right – how you relate to your employer, how your employer relates to you, what sort of labour market there is, what sort of environment you have at work.

See, John Howard runs around and says "I have always believed in families". I don't know what he thinks the rest of us believe in. I mean, does he think we're Martians – we don't come from families? I mean, the arrogance of him, saying he always believed in families as if the rest of us don't. To which I say yes, you

believe in families, but you don't believe in family support. You believe in families, but you don't believe in decent wages to support families. You believe in families, but you don't believe in overtime rates. You believe in families, but you don't believe in penalty rates. You believe in families, but you don't believe in the holiday leave-loading. You believe in families, but you don't believe in universal health insurance, and health access. You believe in families, but only those on the highest incomes you can give a tax-break to - they are the families you believe in.

Now, this is not an academic discussion, or an academic debate - let me just give you some idea about the impact on working people of these sort of policies. And it is this - let's take a typical ambulance officer, who lost the penalties for night shift and weekend work - ambulance officers, of course, work most weekends, and plenty of nights, so it's bound to matter quite a lot. And it does. A typical ambulance officer's pay would be reduced by \$172 a week, even with the same hours but without the overtime and penalty rates. That's over \$8000 a year lost, and that's a lot of income for officers who typically earn around \$36,000 a year. And the same is true of nurses - if you take away from nurses who, of course, have as components of their income overtime, penalties and holiday leave loadings to mention a few, there will be no compensation for them if they are lost, and for the average nurse, it will cost around \$5000 a year. And this is a typical nurse - not a special case. That is, someone who is working in a typical circumstance, doing typically certain hours of overtime during penalty periods. So, there's just 2 classifications of people.

But what sort of Government - and you can see it in Western Australia under that vicious legislation there. Now, the Western Australian Government won't pay the second \$8 safety net for nurses - they won't have an enterprise bargain with them, and they won't pay them. What sort of shabby Government beats up on a group of nurses? That won't give them an \$8 increase to maintain their wages? So we, in the Commonwealth Government, have joined with the Australian Nurses Federation in a case before the Australian Industrial Relations Commission to bring on and make mandatory the payment of the \$8. I mean, that's what they are about. Now, what Reith will tell you - and Mr Howard will say - "oh look, you can stay on the award, we're not changing that, we are giving you that choice", but what they don't tell you is this - that each year, 1.7 million Australian workers either enter the labour market from school, or from university, or women joining the labour market, or come as migrants, or change jobs - 1.73 million people. In 1994, the number of Melbourne people who faced a new employer was 270,000. The nation, it was 1.73 million. If you take a three year period, 42 per cent of Australian workers will have changed jobs within three years. That's 42 per cent who will never get a choice about staying on the award, because once they lose the award, they can't get it back. They then take the contract, or they take nothing. And so there's no choice. The Liberals say we're giving people choice - but there's no choice in that.

And I gave an example of a woman here in Melbourne who is a librarian, two weeks ago in Parliament. She was on \$36,000 a year in her present job, but wanted to apply for a job as a librarian in a part of Melbourne closer to where she lived. She put the application in, to find the job now paid \$19,000, so she had to stay where she is - there's no choice for her. But you see, what happens is once 2 or 3 years go by, and you have got one business out contracting and doing work, who have got employees on much diminished wages, and you have got another business with people on awards, it won't be very long before the 2nd business is uncompetitive. So, what will be happening is they will only take people on who don't want to go on the awards, and so the whole decay goes into the system, and the whole underpinning of the award system goes. So, when Peter Reith says we will give you the choice of staying on the award, say "sure you will Peter - sure you will". And in three years time, half of us will be out there on individual wage contracts without any protection whatsoever. We will go back to that master and servant provisions of the British Common Law of the 19th Century.

So, this is the labour market they have in store for the rest of us - this is the sort of way after now a decade of industrial cooperation, with a 3 per cent inflation rate, with 670,000 job growth, with over 2 million new jobs since 1983, with an economy performing at nearly twice the rate of economic growth under Labor as under the Liberals, with a stock market going up by four-fold in value - they're saying well thank you for that cooperation, now we'll tell you what we have instore for you. You keep your place - you get out there in individual wage contract, and you take what the employer offers you. And you say well hang on, what's wrong with some protections of the awards and the safety nets - haven't we struggled for this for a century, and haven't we reasonably operated this system? And they are just going to go back to the same policies that you would have seen - as I said earlier - under the likes of Earl Page of Stanley Melbourne Bruce or Joe Lyons or any of them - they will try to push working people down And while they are doing it, rip away at one of those fundamentals which is, of course, protection under the health system and under Medicare.

So this is going to be an important election, just like 1993 was. Now there is a lot of new wisdom invented particularly by commentators about election results. They said Labor won the 1993 election because of the GST. That is simply not true. We won the 1993 election because people had an idea of the sort of Australia it would become under John Hewson.

You might remember coming up to that campaign I was making a speech in Brisbane to a Labor audience about the unemployed and we had at the time unemployment rising not falling. And I said we will never leave the unemployed behind. We will always put our arm out and bring them up with us. We will bring them back into the society. We will deal with the long term unemployed and we will put a premium on employment and we will bring them along.

John Hewson said in Parliament a week later, "the Prime Minister says he will put his arm out and pull the unemployed up. When you put your arm out to pull up the unemployed and the disadvantaged, they will pull you down."

Now it is that sort of remark and that sort of view that lost the Liberals the 1993 election. The GST was but an example of the panoply of nasties they had ready for the Australian people, including, of course, destroying the health insurance system - amongst others - in the biggest tax switch which would have disadvantaged low and middle income people. And now, they think, they can hide that. At least Hewson had his policies there.

The point I make about John Howard, he is always saying "oh, I am honest John". I say, well listen, what about this for an idea? I believe that honesty and credibility in politics can only be about policies. That the nation's entitled to know from its political leaders where they see the national direction going, where they see the policy framework being developed.

I mean aren't they at least entitled to know where each of the parties would take them? What sort of honesty can there be without some integrity in the party policy processes about telling them? But what he thinks he will do is repaint himself and camouflage himself and try to slide under the wire at an election and then bring all the nasties out afterwards.

Now we saw a typical example of this, this week, in the Business Review Weekly - a business magazine. In it Peter Costello, the Shadow Treasurer says he will introduce something to deal with, what is called, the Vertical Fiscal Imbalance in the payments between the Commonwealth and the States. What he was saying was a Coalition Government will introduce a State income tax so that the States can raise more money, more like the money they spend, rather than relying on the Commonwealth to give it to them.

This expression Vertical Fiscal Imbalance means it is a comparison between what the States spend and what they raise and because there is, they say, a perceived imbalance because the Commonwealth gives them a lot of the money, they don't actually raise it, States would behave better if they raised the money. Therefore, they are better with taxing powers.

Now the Liberals have always believed in fracturing Australia back to the States. They are always talking about new federalism as if the act of Federation was in some way an act to buttress the States. The act of Federation in 1901 was the act of the creation of the nation and, since the war, we have seen the development of a national economy from the uniform taxing powers that came under John Curtin and Ben Chifley in the war years, we have developed a national economy.

We're 18 million people, we're in a continent, we share a border with nobody, there is no line of distinction amongst them - other than some phoney colonial lines drawn on a map one hundred odd years ago - we are a nation at one. We are one nation.

There should be basically one national economy. One national Government running the national economy. One national income tax system. But they say the problem about that is that the progressive agenda is advanced by Federal Labor Governments who win office because if they have a national economy and a bag full of national powers, they will advance the progressive agenda - which is, of course, contrary to the conservative agenda.

So they say the way to stop a Labor Government, federally, doing this is we split the power back to the States so we give them income taxes and we give them consumption taxes. We can't do a consumption tax. Every time we put our head up, we get beaten on that. So we will give the States the right to put a consumption tax and we will then have six State little economies. So when a Federal Labor Government comes along in the future, they won't have the powers they have had in the past to do things like universal health insurance or the external affairs power for the environment, or any of the other great redistributive things Labor Governments do. We won't be able to have an Accord with the trade unions. We won't have wage/tax trade-offs. We won't have award superannuation. We will split the power back.

Here we are this week and Costello brazenly is up their saying "we will do something about Vertical Fiscal Imbalance in our first year of office." The moment I put a statement out saying notice this, he says "liar". And we say well hang on, here is your quotations. He said "oh, what I meant was only giving them a fixed share of Commonwealth income."

But a fixed share of Commonwealth income is still Commonwealth income. It doesn't touch the Vertical Fiscal Imbalance and it is that, he said, he will repair. He then says he has talked to the States and surprise, surprise - or really no surprise - Jeff Kennett comes out this week and says "the Commonwealth should have 20 per cent of the tax and the States should have 80 per cent". And then he says "the Commonwealth should have just some core functions - defence, and the currency, and a couple of other things, and that is it". In other words, the powers should be back with the States and so should the money.

But we say, well hang on Jeffrey you have got the powers now and what are you doing, you are closing schools, you are closing hospitals. You want the powers but then you don't want them. You want the power to take the power away and then you want the income tax.

Now Peter Costello has said he consulted the conservative States and he did and he consulted Jeff Kennett, and he consulted Ray Groom, and he has consulted Dean Brown etc and they agree with him. They want a State income tax. But the moment we say, by your own words, here it is, they say "lie".

Now I don't know whether they expect the media to just repeat their rebuttals. But gradually, you know, these things are coming into the public debate and you see what their real agenda is and it is the same old agenda, isn't it? Income tax powers for the States, a State consumption tax. And, yesterday, we found that Access Economics is putting together a study on a State consumption tax for the conservative States.

A State income tax, State consumption taxes, an industrial relations system that goes back to individual contracts and no award protections and declines in wages, private health insurance and support for specialists in private hospitals. And yet John Howard thinks he is going to get away with repainting himself as some sort of new-age person who is going to trick the rest of you into believing that at 55 he has eschewed all the views he has ever had and he is a changed person. He has had the Paulian conversion on the way to the ballot box.

Well I will just tell you this. There is another Box Hill coming up for John Howard. Now he won't have his policy launch here because this is the site of a Little Big Horn for him. He won't have another one here. But there is another Box Hill coming for him and it is coming for him because, for this simple reason, that he wants to change the community values of Australia. He wants to change the sort of society we are.

And you saw his defence speech two weeks ago, where he was saying "we want security from Asia, not in Asia". I mean indirectly he said, "the region has an opportunity but at the same time it is a threat and we really should be cuddling up to the United States".

You know, it is the same old view. They want to change the society. They want to change the culture. They want to take one of the fairest and most decent societies we have developed here and break it and smash it up. They have no faith in Australians and no belief in the nation as a whole. And that is the thing I have always held such objection to the Liberals about.

At their core, they don't have the faith in the Australian people. They don't think we are capable of better things together. They don't believe that there is goodness in people, that they will do things for their own good spiritedness and for the national good. They don't believe. Yet they want to govern Australia with some sort of miserable alien philosophy to the place, that you might have found in Victorian England in the last gasp of the 19th century, or in the middle of this century in Australia like Cold War warriors like Sir Robert Menzies – you know,

who regard Asia as a problem, who could only see ourselves cuddling up at Whitehall or in Washington, who basically want to keep working people in their place.

Well they are not going to be kept in their place. They are going to find out about him just like they found out about John Hewson.

The difference between John Hewson - to give him his credit - he had the courage to say what he meant he would do. But this character, thinks he can slip and slide around it and not say it at all.

So this is going to be a fight for Australia's values. This is going to be a referendum on ideas and ideals and in the big marketplace of those referendums, John Howard can't escape by having no policies and trying to camouflage himself.

So I say to the people who have come here today, many of you believing in these things - but particularly some of the industrial representation that is here today, from the nurses and the ambulance officers and others - and just say that your plight is not falling on deaf ears, that we know what a battle it is, that we know about the miserable public accountancy of the Kennett's, and the Stockdale's, and the Howard's, and the Reith's, and the Costello's.

But we won't have a bar of it and when we win the next Federal election and when we have got them on the grass for 16 years, we will then be in a position where most of these mores are so imbedded that even doing their worst, they will never unseat them. Now that is what the battle is about.

Now in this electorate of Chisholm, we have had a former Deputy Leader of the Coalition, Michael Wooldridge. Basically he was unknown until he made a few outrageous remarks about Carmen Lawrence a couple of weeks ago. He does nothing here. Nobody I have ever spoken to from this electorate knows him or can remember anything that he has actually done for the community.

Now this is not true of Labor people. We are always of the community. We believe in the community. We come from the community. That is what Tony Robinson will do. He is from the community. He will represent the community, as Helen Mayer before him, for Labor. And you can't run an up-beat, up-lifting society with people in the parliamentary parties who don't believe in things, who don't really represent people, who don't feel the community views coming through and who try and advance the commonweal with that belief and faith in Australia and Australians.

Now all of that, I believe, is certainly part and parcel of Tony Robinson's character and make-up. He will make a first class Member for Chisholm and he

will help put a Labor Government back there in Canberra because this is one of the seats we have to win.

So we are not here just beating our gums. We are here about real and genuine things, about values and ideals that matter and about the shape of Australia as we approach this exciting period. Never have we been set up like this before. 18 million of us in a continent without a border with anybody, with a chance of having an environment second to none, in the fastest growing part of the world – the Asia Pacific – while we are making our settlement of our participation in the region.

I mean what an exciting prospect and a fair country that has got good values. I mean to turn all that back now and go back as John Howard said he wants to do, to go back to the values of the mono-culture, to regard Asia as some alien place and to start fracturing up Australia into States, and dividing our community – this is not the way forward for Australia. And the Labor Party, as always, will fight the good fight for good values, for good ideals and for good things and I know you will help us do it.

Thank you very much for having me.

ends.