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PRIME MINISTER

1 December 1996

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER
THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP
ADDRESS AT WA COALITION POLICY LAUNCH
HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE - PERTH**

E&OE.....

Thank you very much Hendy Cowan; to Dr David Honey, the President of the Western Australian division of the Liberal Party; Dexter Davies, the President of the Western Australian National Party; my many parliamentary colleagues both Federal and State; ladies and gentlemen.

I am both happy and proud to be here at the launch of the campaign to re-elect Richard Court as Premier of Western Australia. He deserves, and his Government deserves re-election for many reasons, not least of which has been the progressive but responsible leadership and vision that he has demonstrated since his election only a few years ago.

Everyone knows the extraordinary mess that he inherited. I notice my counterpart in the Federal Parliament said this morning on television that in Western Australia Labor carries a few burdens. It's a bit like saying Christopher Skase pinched a few bob, or Shane Warne plays a bit of cricket. Labor certainly does carry many burdens in Western Australia, but more important than the burdens that Labor

carries in Western Australia were the burdens that were left behind by the retreating Labor Government when Richard and Hendy took over.

And the last few years have seen progressive, intelligent, vigorous Government here in Western Australia. It is without doubt the strongest growing State in Australia. It has a youth unemployment rate of 20% compared with a national average of 27% or 28%. It has an unemployment rate which is well below the national average. It has an economic growth rate which is well above the national average. These figures are not accidental. They are the result of what has been achieved over the last few years. They are the result of a group of men and women inheriting a difficult job and finding the courage and vision and the energy to tackle that extremely difficult task.

Your budget here in Western Australia is now strongly in surplus. You have restored standards of honesty and accountability in Government. You are for the first time blazing the trail in opening the books so that no more can we have these ridiculous options that have occurred in the past at election time, both at a State and Federal level, and I warmly commend the Western Australian Coalition Government for having done that.

But you have very importantly through a united Coalition brought together the forces of free enterprise and market forces and private property in this State. The coalition between the Liberal Party and the National Party in Western Australia has been a great success and it proves once again the truth of the proposition in Australian politics that when the Liberal and National parties work together they win together and that has been true nationally, it has been true in other States and it has been demonstrated here in Western Australia.

And finally may I say that you have in Richard Court as your Premier somebody who is a great fighter for the interests of Western Australia. Whatever our unity may be across the nation as fellow Liberals, when it comes to the interests of Western Australia, there is no person anywhere in the country who fights harder for the particular interests and rails against the particular disabilities that Western Australians sometimes suffer.

Now, it is against that background of clearing up the mess, a visionary Government of united Coalition purpose and also very effective co-operation with us at a federal level that I am absolutely delighted to be here and most particularly invite you to welcome Richard Court and his wife, Jo.

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