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PRIME MINISTER

7 June 1997

**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER
THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP
QUEENSLAND LIBERAL PARTY
STATE COUNCIL DINNER**

E&EO.....

Thank you. Well thank you very much. I know I've probably disappointed you because I didn't walk straight from my table over there to the podium. I have my limitations but I'm working on those.

To Joan Sheldon, to Bob and Greer Tucker, to Tony Staley the Federal President of the Liberal Party, to my former parliamentary colleague Don Cameron, to all of my Federal and State parliamentary colleagues and members and supporters of the Liberal Party here in Queensland. It's great to be with you here in Cairns, this beautiful city in Far North Queensland on such a balmy evening and Lord let it not rain here let it rain in Birmingham.

Ladies and gentleman I'm going to make a speech tomorrow to the Convention which I will say a few things about competition in politics at the present time. But can I say at the beginning of my very short remarks tonight, can I say to you, Bob Tucker, can I say on behalf of all of my Federal parliamentary colleagues how deeply grateful we are to the tremendous leadership that you gave to the Queensland Division of the Liberal Party over the last four years.

It is the case that during your Presidency we won State Government here in Queensland and it's also the case that we won, what is in post World War II terms, a record number of Liberal seats federally. And I am very grateful to the Liberal Party organisation under your leadership for the tremendous work that you've done.

May I also congratulate Bob Carroll on his election and say on behalf of the Party organisation that I will work, as you always do as the head of the parliamentary party, matters of office holding in the organisation is a matter for the organisation and can I simply say to you Bob that we will work very, very closely together.

It is a very important 12 or 18 months ahead of us here in Queensland. And if I can speak almost as an honorary Queenslander to you tonight, very happily to do so, we have a very important 12 or 18 months ahead of us which will certainly encompass a State election and of course the next Federal election is due in March of 1999. So we

have a lot of work to do together. We have a lot of work to do focussing on the common enemy and that of course is the Australian Labor Party and all of those who refuse to vote for the Coalition.

But tonight is, above all, a celebration of Liberal achievement and Liberal success. It's a celebration of the fact that we are back in Government here in Queensland. It's a celebration of the fact that we have a very big majority in Federal parliament but it's also a reminder of the responsibilities that we have to govern in the best interests of the Australian people. And a responsibility we have to take decisions which are common-sense decisions and decisions that promote the interests of the Australian community and not decisions that are blinded by ideology. And can I say that a couple of days ago a decision in which the senior Queensland Federal Member, John Moore, was very much involved in and that is the decision that we took on the motor vehicle industry. That was a decision that was driven by our determination to provide a secure investment climate in Australia that protected Australian jobs and promoted investment in an industry that would provide more Australian jobs.

And providing more jobs for Australians is the ultimate responsibility of any national government and it is something of which we should always remind ourselves.

Ladies and gentlemen tonight is a fun night. It's a night of celebration, it's a night to enjoy the company of people who have worked together and campaigned together and succeeded together because we do have the right as Liberals, particularly here in Queensland, to look back over the last 12 months and to reflect upon the fact that we have come a very long way and we have achieved a great deal together.

I reminded my Chief of Staff, Grahame Morris, on the way up that the last time I addressed the Queensland Convention the speech I made about free speech got quite a lot press coverage. The year before the speech I made about the Coalition's attitude towards proposals that Australia should become a Republic, that is when we were still in Opposition, that speech attracted enormous publicity also. So, Morris said to me: 'Well you know you've got work out something to trump those two speeches in what you say tomorrow'. Well, I'm working on that and I can assure you that I'll have a few things that are very relevant to the future of the Government and to the future of Australia to say to all of you tomorrow.

But ladies and gentlemen can I just say on behalf of the Federal parliamentary party what a great debt we owe to the Queensland Division for the number of seats it delivered and the support that it's given to us over the last 12 months. And could I also take the opportunity, because I'm in Queensland, to say what a sheer delight it is for me to work with Tim Fischer as the Leader of the National Party in Coalition.

You may, along a very long journey and a very long path have the occasional difference of opinion in a Coalition and I've gone through that in the last few weeks but the solid basis of the Federal Coalition is absolutely rock safe and Tim Fischer is a great coalitionist, he is a very fine Australian, he's tremendously committed to advancing the cause of Coalition Government and, like myself, he remembers the fact that we were in Opposition for 13 years. And he is aware of that great political adage, that when the Liberal and National Parties work together they win together and when

the Liberal and National Parties forget that lesson and don't take heed of that experience then the reverse happens.

So can I say to all of you that close unity and working relations, not only within our own party that is fundamentally important but also unity of purpose, identification of the common enemy and a determination to keep the political barbarians outside the gate which of course is what is my fundamental attitude to the Labor Party. You keep them on the other side of the gate, you never let them in because they did a lot of damage last time they got inside the gate.

So what politics is still very much about is unity inside our own organisation, within our parliamentary party and unity between the Liberal and National Parties. We've demonstrated over the last couple of years that when we do that we win and succeed and we provide good government for the State of Queensland and good government for the whole Australian nation and it's a lesson that all of us I know will bear in mind.

But ladies and gentlemen, friends, Liberals all, thank you for your support, your loyalty, your commitment, your dedication and energy in our great common cause and I look forward to addressing you tomorrow.

Thanks.

Ends

**PRIME MINISTER'S CONGRATULATORY REMARKS
TO BOB TUCKER ON HIS AWARD OF LIFETIME
MEMBERSHIP OF THE LIBERAL PARTY**

Well ladies and gentlemen, can I just have your attention very, very momentarily, but it's a tremendous honour, as somebody myself I joined the Liberal Party in 1958, ye Gods, it's a long time ago, and it's a tremendous honour to award Life Membership of the Liberal Party to somebody and it's a great honour for anybody to receive it. It's a very special award, it is not conferred very often amongst the various State Divisions of the Party around Australia.

In my speech earlier I spoke of the tremendous contribution that Bob made as the driving force of the organisation here in Queensland over the last four years as its President and as the person who saw the Labor Party reduced to holding only two seats federally here in Queensland. Many people contributed in the organisation, but of course none more so and more effectively than did your President over that period of time, and it's with a real sense of privilege and pleasure that I hand the credentials of Life Membership of the Queensland Division to Bob Tucker.