

Kevin Rudd: Acceptance Speech (24th November 2007)

1 Okay, guys.

2 A short time ago, Mr Howard called me to offer his congratulations.

3 I thanked him for that, and the dignity with which he extended those congratulations.

4 We should celebrate and honour the way in which we conduct this great Australian

5 democracy of ours.

6 And it's been on display again tonight.

7 I want to acknowledge now, for the entire Australian nation, and publicly recognise Mr

8 Howard's extensive contribution to public service in Australia.

9 There are big differences between us, but we share a common pride in this great nation

10 of ours, Australia.

11 And I want to wish Mr and Mrs Howard, and their family, all the very best for the

12 future.

13 Today, Australia has looked to the future.

14 Today the Australian people have decided that we, as a nation, will move forward - to

15 plan for the future, to prepare for the future, to embrace the future, and together, as

16 Australians, to unite and write a new page in our nation's history, to make this great

17 country of ours, Australia, even greater.

18 Today, many people across Australia have voted Labor for the very first time.

19 Today, many people across Australia have voted Labor for the first time in a long, long

20 time and I want to thank all those people in Australia who have placed their trust in me

21 and my team.

22 And I say tonight to the nation, I will never take their sacred trust for granted.

23 I understand that this is a great privilege and I will do everything to honour the trust which

24 has been extended to me.

25 I also understand there is a great responsibility involved in national leadership, and I stand

26 ready to accept that responsibility.

27 I am determined to honour the confidence which has been extended to us by the

28 people of our great land, and I say to all of those who have voted for us today, I say to

29 each and every one of them that I will be a prime minister for all Australians.

30 A prime minister for indigenous Australians.

31 Australians who have been born here and Australians who have come here from afar

32 and have contributed to the great diversity that is our nation, Australia.

33 A prime minister for our cities and our towns.

34 A prime minister for rural Australia, which right now is experiencing the worst drought our

35 country has known.

36 For our men and women in uniform, serving in difficult and dangerous environments

37 around the world, for all our states and territories of this great nation and

38 Commonwealth of ours, I will be prime minister for all Australians.

39 And I make this solemn pledge to the nation - I will always govern in the national

40 interest.

41 And my door will always be open to men and women of goodwill who want to

42 participate in making our country even greater in the future.

43 Friends, tomorrow the work begins.

44 Australia's long-term challenges demand a new consensus across our country.

45 I'm determined to use the office of prime minister to forge that consensus.

46 It is necessary for us to embrace the future as a nation united, forged with a common

47 vision.

48 I want to put aside the old battles of the past.

49 The old battles between business and unions.

50 The old battles between growth and the environment.

51 The old and tired battles between federal and state.
52 The old battles between public and private.
53 It's time for a new page to be written in our nation's history.
54 The future is too important for us not to work together to embrace the challenges of the
55 future and to carve out our nation's destiny.
56 We have put before the Australian people a plan. It's our agenda for work,
57 and you know something?
58 Everything I have said through this election campaign, and in the year leading up to it, is
59 our agenda for work.
60 To start building a world-class education system.
61 To embrace the long-term funding needs of our public hospital system.
62 To act, and act with urgency, on the great challenges of climate change and water.
63 To build a 21st century infrastructure for a 21st century economy.
64 And to get the balance right between fairness and flexibility in the workplaces of the
65 nation.
66 And to ensure by that and by other practical assistance to working families in Australia
67 that the great Australian fair go has a future and not just a past.
68 And, through all this, to make sure we keep our economy strong but make sure it delivers
69 for working families as well.
70 And this task as well – to remain ever vigilant in the defence of our nation's national
71 security.
72 The task ahead will not be an easy one. I understand that, I grasp that,
73 but this government that I will lead will work with energy and determination and vigour
74 and with fresh ideas to embrace each of these challenges and to prosecute this agenda
75 for work for the nation.
76 I also say this, on this national occasion, to our friends and allies around the world, that I
77 look forward as the next prime minister of Australia to working with them in dealing with
78 the great challenges which our world now faces.
79 I extend our greetings tonight to our great friend and ally, the United States.
80 To our great friends and partners across Asia and the Pacific, and to our great friends
81 and partners in Europe and beyond, we look forward to working in partnership with all
82 those nations.
83 And now to say some thank yous.
84 I begin by thanking the people of Brisbane's Southside, who have done me the great
85 honour again of returning me as their Member of Parliament, the Member for Griffith.
86 My local community is the rock upon which all other things are built, and I thank them
87 again for the trust they've extended to me.
88 I also want to thank the great Australian Labor Party.
89 This party that I joined 25 years ago.
90 This party which embraces the great mission of how we can build prosperity for our
91 nation without ever throwing the fair go out the back door.
92 I want to thank the members and supporters of our party for the work they have put in
93 right across this nation today.
94 Each and every one of them. Each of those volunteers. Every electorate contest
95 across the breadth of Australia, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.
96 For you have kept the faith in good times and in bad, and I honour your contribution your
97 patience, your perseverance, and the blood, sweat and tears you've dedicated to this
98 election victory today.
99 I also want to make special mention tonight of Bernie Banton.
100 Bernie, a fighter for the victims of asbestos, who is gravely ill in hospital in Sydney
101 tonight.

102 I say to Bernie, if he is watching this broadcast, mate, you're not going to be forgotten in
103 this place.
104 The values for which you have stood and fought, and the fact that you have been
105 supported in your fight by the great Australian trade union movement, when so many
106 others were prepared to simply cast you to one side, Bernie, you stand out as a beacon
107 and clarion call to us all about what is decent and necessary in life and,
108 mate, I salute you.

109 I want to thank my deputy, Julia Gillard.
110 And Julia, Julia, I know you're not in Queensland tonight, but you got a fantastic
111 reception from a Queensland audience.
112 She has been fantastic as the Deputy Leader of the Australian Labor Party.
113 She'll be fantastic as the deputy prime minister of Australia.
114 I want to thank all my shadow ministers, led by Wayne Swan here in Queensland.
115 You can take the boys out of Nambour, but you can't take Nambour out of the boys.
116 I would like to thank also all members of my parliamentary team across Australia and
117 all those candidates who have gone out there and held high the flag of our party on this
118 election day '07. I thank them one and all.
119 To our party President, John Faulkner, who has been with me throughout this
120 campaign and whose job on Senate Estimates will be of a different type now.
121 To the national campaign team, led by our fantastic National Secretary, Tim Gartrell.
122 And to my great friend in NSW, Mark Arbib, and the great support right across the
123 machinery of our party to deliver this election outcome today, I thank you one and
124 all.

125 To my staff – my fantastic staff – I think you are just remarkable.
126 The work you have done, the blood, sweat and tears that have been poured out, I just
127 couldn't ask for better from any of you.
128 Thank you one and all.

129 To David Epstein, my chief-of-staff, thanks David.
130 To Alister Jordan, my deputy chief-of-staff, thank you Alister.
131 He's had to put up with me for five years.
132 Gina Tilley and Nev Conway from my electorate office.
133 And they are a fantastic local team and I thank them one and all.
134 I would also want tonight to thank my life partner, Therese.
135 I joined this party 25 years ago. We were married 26 years ago.
136 She has been an extraordinary support to me and, you know something?
137 Therese has had a tough year as well, and I cannot speak more highly of the great
138 support and the great love and encouragement she's extended to me in this political
139 career upon which I've embarked.
140 Darling, I really appreciate it.
141 To each of my wonderful kids – Marcus, to Nicholas, to Jessica and her husband Albert - I
142 just say this family means everything to me.
143 I also honour my wider family - my brothers Malcolm and Greg, and my sister Loree – who
144 have been great supports for me for a long period of time.
145 And tonight I would also honour the memory of my Mum and Dad.
146 Dad died nearly 40 years ago.
147 He'd be surprised about tonight.
148 Particularly as he was in the Country Party.
149 And Mum, who died the day before the last election.
150 I honour their memory and I salute the values they delivered to this, their son.
151 'Cause you know something? Without family, we are nothing.
152 Friends, history has given our generation the opportunity to shape a new future for this
153 nation of ours, Australia.

154 Let us be the generation that seizes the opportunities of today to invest in the Australia of
155 tomorrow.
156 That's the mission statement we have as the next government of this country, but I want
157 to do it by us all working together as one.
158 Tomorrow, and I say this to the team, we roll up our sleeves.
159 We're ready for hard work.
160 We're ready for the long haul.
161 You can have a strong cup of tea if you want in the meantime.
162 Even an iced Vo Vo on the way through.
163 But the celebration should stop there.
164 We have a job of work to do.
165 It's time, friends, for us together as a nation to bind together to write this new page in our
166 great nation's history.
167 I thank the nation.