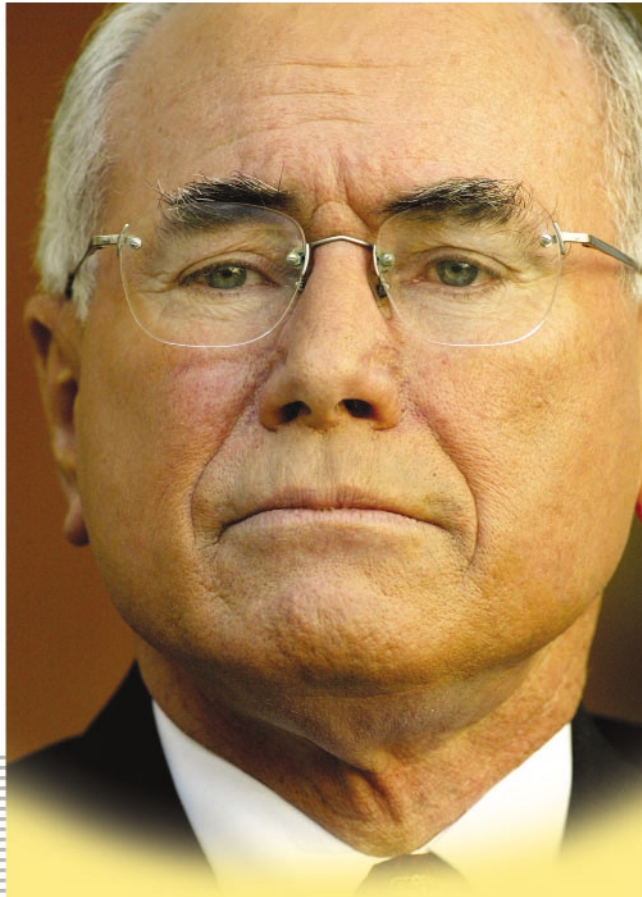


Truth Overboard



27 Lies told by John Howard and counting

*"Truth is absolute, truth is
supreme, truth is never
disposable in national
political life."*

John Howard

ABC Radio "AM", 25 August 1995

Health

John Howard Lie # 1

“It is our policy, without qualification, to retain Medicare . . . Not only does Medicare stay but so does bulk billing . . . They are the fundamentals, the underpinnings of the policy.”

John Howard, Health Policy launch of “*A Healthy Future*”, **12 February 1996**

The Truth:

“No-one can guarantee bulk billing. No-one can guarantee bulk billing without conscripting the medical profession. Medicare has never been universal bulk billing—never . . .”

Tony Abbott, Minister for Health and Ageing, *Meet the Press*, **23 November 2003**

John Howard Lie # 2

“Medicare will be retained in its entirety.”

John Howard, **February 1996**

The Truth:

The Howard Government abolished the dental plan and bulk billing rates have declined by more than 12 percentage points since the Coalition took office in 1996.

John Howard Lie # 3

During the 2001 Federal election campaign John Howard promised that his Government’s policies would “lead to reduced premiums” for health insurance.

“*Heading in the Right Direction*”, p151

The Truth:

Since the election in 2001, the Government has approved increases in premiums totalling 21 per cent.

Education

John Howard Lie # 4

“I can guarantee we’re not going to have \$100,000 university degree courses.”

John Howard, interview with Neil Mitchell on *Radio 3AW*, **15 October 1999**

The Truth:

16 different degrees now cost at least \$100,000.

John Howard Lie # 5

“We have no intention of introducing a loans scheme with a real or indeed any other rate of interest.”

John Howard, in Parliament, **18 October 1999**

The Truth:

“Debts accrued under FEE-HELP will be indexed to the consumer price index . . . A loan fee of 20 per cent will apply to FEE-HELP loans for undergraduate courses of study only.”

Higher Education Loan Programme, Department of Education, Science and Training Update, **March 2004**

John Howard Lie # 6

“Well, it means that we’ll not have deregulated fees. In other words, the Government will always maintain a control over what the level of the fee is.”

John Howard, interview on *Radio 3AW*, **15 October 1999**

The Truth:

“We do need more money in our universities . . . and some of it should come outside the budget through a managed and sensible deregulation of the system.”

John Howard in Parliament, **16 September 2003**

The GST, Other Taxes and Red Tape

John Howard Lie

7

John Howard: “No, there’s no way that a GST will ever be part of our policy.”

Journalist: “Never ever?”

John Howard: “Never ever. It’s dead. It was killed by the voters in the last election”.

John Howard, interview, Tweed Heads Civic Centre, **2 May 1995**

The Truth:

“The bills before the House will enact a broad based goods and services tax that will be levied at 10 per cent and will start in July 2000.”

Peter Costello, Treasurer, *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax Bill)*, Second Reading Speech, **2 December 1998**

John Howard Lie

8

“The GST will not increase the price of petrol for the ordinary motorist . . .”

John Howard, *Address to the Nation on the Tax Plan*, **13 August 1998**

The Truth:

The price of automotive fuel rose 10.4 per cent in the September quarter following the introduction of the GST on 1 July 2000, and was 23.6 per cent higher than at the same time the previous year.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, ABS@, *Time Series Spreadsheets*, Consumer Price Index 6401.0

John Howard Lie

9

“There’ll be no more than a 1.9% rise in ordinary beer.”

John Howard, *John Laws Program*, **23 September 1998**

The Truth:

The price of beer rose 4.8 per cent in the September quarter following the introduction of the GST on 1 July 2000, and was 8.5 per cent higher than the same time the previous year.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, ABS@, *Time Series Spreadsheets*, Consumer Price Index 6401.0

John Howard Lie

10

Journalist: “Will the number of pages in the Tax Act be reduced by the introduction of a GST? “

Prime Minister: “Yes it will”.

John Howard, interview Alan Jones *Radio 2UE*, **14 August 1998**

The Truth:

“... the Tax Act has grown from 3,000 to over 9,000 pages and an additional 2.5 million words have been inserted into the Tax Act, since 1 July 2000. Apart from these overwhelming changes foisted onto small businesses, we now have over 2 million businesses registered under the GST, compared to less than 17,000 under the former sales tax regime.”

National Tax & Accountants' Association, **15 August 2002**

John Howard Lie

11

Kerry O'Brien: “Okay. the pledge of no new taxes, no increase in existing taxes for the life of the next parliament. So for the next three years, not even a one cent increase on cigarettes or beer or wine or petrol, no other indirect tax increase, no tax increase of any kind?”

John Howard: “That promise is quite explicit”.

John Howard, *ABC 7:30 Report*, **1 February 1996**

The Truth:

By 30 September 2002, John Howard's Government had introduced legislation for 130 new taxes or tax increases during its terms of office.

“*Bills which imposed a new tax or increased an existing tax introduced during the 38th to 40th Parliaments*”, Clerk of the Senate, **30 October 2002**

Meetings with the Ethanol Industry

John Howard Lie #

12

Labor MP question to the Prime Minister: “Prime Minister, was the government contacted by the major Australian producer of ethanol or by any representative of his company or the Industry Association before its decision to impose fuel excise on ethanol?”

John Howard: “Speaking for myself, I did not personally have any discussions, from recollection, with any of them.”

John Howard, *Question Time*, **17 September 2002**

The Truth:

John Howard had met on 1 August the head of Manildra Group [Dick Honan], which makes 87 per cent of our ethanol, and they discussed how to help the Australian ethanol industry.

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Official Record of Meeting, **1 August 2002**

Aged Care and the Pension Clawback

John Howard Lie # 13

Interviewer: “Well, if the Budget’s in such good shape why persist with things like the pension claw back . . .”

John Howard: “No, no . . . because Glenn there is no clawback. And what happened with those things is that they were paid in advance and we’re not taking them back, we’re just avoiding paying them twice . . .”

John Howard, interview with Glenn Milne, *Sunday Sunrise*, 4 March 2001

John Howard Lie # 14

“There has been no clawback, there has been no deduction and there has been no deceit”.

John Howard, Parliament, 5 March 2001

The Truth:

“The indexation adjustments to pensions and adult allowance rates for 20 March 2001 will have the additional issue of clawback . . . Two per cent of the existing rate will be deducted from the normal CPI adjustment . . .”

Department of Family and Community Services, *internal briefing paper*, quoted in Parliament, 5 March 2001

The Current Account Deficit

John Howard Lie # 15

“I can promise you that we will follow policies which will, over a period of time, bring down the foreign debt . . . our first priority in Government economically will be to tackle the current account deficit.”

John Howard, Doorstop interview, Debt Truck Launch, 20 September 1995

The Truth:

Foreign debt was \$361 billion at the end of September 2003, an increase of 90 per cent on the September 1995 level. The current account deficit was \$11.9 billion at the end of September 2003, an increase of 112.5 per cent on the September 1995 level.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, ABS@, *Time Series Spreadsheets (Balance of Payments and Investment Position*, Australia 5302.0, Reserve Bank of Australia (H) Bulletin, Current Account)

Labour Market Programs

John Howard Lie #

16

“Well, we’re certainly going to maintain the existing level of funding for labour market programs”.

John Howard, Address to Youth, Macgregor, **20 February 1996**

The Truth:

Kerry O’Brien: “Okay. But on 20 February, you said very clearly ‘We are certainly going to maintain the existing level of funding for labour market programs’. Now, for all the people on those labour market programs, I would suggest it to them that would have been a pretty core promise and you’ve broken it.”

John Howard: “Well, it is true that we are not spending as much money on labour market programs”.

John Howard, interview on ABC 7:30 Report, **21 August 1996**

Services for the Bush

John Howard Lie #

17

“I don’t want to see any further services, government service levels withdrawn from or taken away from the bush . . . I gave instructions for that this morning when I spoke to my office in Canberra, that in any future Government decisions that, in effect, a red light flashes if that Government decision involves a reduction in the delivery of an existing Commonwealth service.”

John Howard, Nyngan Community Luncheon, **31 January 2000**

The Truth:

The Howard Government reduced the number of Job Network sites by 42 per cent, from 1710 to 986, and the number of outreach services by 65 per cent, from 404 to 140.”

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, *Employment Services Contract 2003–2006, Aggregate Analysis*, **March 2003**

Job Network Conditional Offers, *Aggregate Analysis*, **December 1999**

Children Overboard

John Howard Lie

18

“The Government’s position remains that we were advised by Defence that children were thrown overboard, we made those allegations on the basis of that advice, and until I get Defence advice to the contrary I will maintain that position”.

John Howard, *Sunrise*, Channel 7, **9 November 2001**

The Truth:

“I left him in no doubt that there was no evidence, that there were no children thrown overboard.”

Mike Scrafton, *7:30 Report*, **16 August 2004**

John Howard Lie

19

“. . . the behaviour of a number of these people, [on Siev 4] particularly those involving throwing their children overboard . . .”

John Howard, *ABC Radio 3LO Melbourne*, **9 October 2001**

The Truth:

“There is no indication that children were thrown overboard.”

Defence Strategic Command chronology to Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, noon on 10 October (quoted in Investigation into advice provided to Ministers on ‘SIEV 4’, 21 January 2001)

John Howard Lie

20

“Nothing can alter the fact that I have in my possession an ONA report that states baldly . . . that children were thrown in the water.”

John Howard, *SBS Insight* program, **8 November 2001**

The Truth:

“. . . fundamentally there was nothing to suggest that women and children had been thrown into the water.”

Account of private conversation Acting Chief of the Defence Forces, Angus Houston, had with Peter Reith, Minister for Defence, on 7 November 2001, evidence given to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee, **20 February 2002**

The Iraq War and Weapons of Mass Destruction

John Howard Lie

21

“The Australian Government knows that Iraq still has chemical and biological weapons and that Iraq wants to develop nuclear weapons.”

John Howard, Speech to Parliament before the war in Iraq, **4 February 2003**

The Truth:

“I stand by the fact that before we entered the war, we had a very strong intelligence assessment that Iraq had a WMD capability.”

John Howard, interview with Charles Wooly, *60 Minutes*, after the war in Iraq, **20 July 2003**

John Howard Lie

22

“Iraq continues to work on developing nuclear weapons—uranium has been sought from Africa that has no civil nuclear application in Iraq; . . .”

John Howard, *Ministerial Statement*, before the war in Iraq, **4 February 2003**

The Truth:

“. . . an intelligence claim about Iraq’s effort to acquire uranium from Africa proved to be erroneous.”

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, *Sydney Morning Herald*, after the war in Iraq, **18 June 2003**

John Howard Lie

23

“The Government has decided to commit Australian forces to action to disarm Iraq because we believe it is right, it is lawful and it’s in Australia’s national interest. We are determined to join other countries to deprive Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction, its chemical and biological weapons, which even in minute quantities are capable of causing death and destruction on a mammoth scale.”

John Howard, Address to the Nation, before the war in Iraq, **20 March 2003**

The Truth:

“We entered the war in Iraq based upon the failure of the Iraqi government at the time to comply with United Nations’ resolutions . . .”

John Howard, Press Conference, after the war, **22 July 2003**

John Howard Lie

24

Journalist: In your talks tomorrow, especially at the Pentagon, do you expect to lock in a possible role for Australia if, further down the track we do decide to join a coalition of the willing?

Prime Minister: Look there have been contingency discussions going on between the American and the Australian military and it's always important in these situations to leave those sorts of things to the militaries of the two countries.

John Howard, Press Conference, Washington, **9 February 2003**

The Truth:

Journalist: "Could you tell us whether you count Australia as part of the coalition of the willing?"

President Bush: "Yes, I do".

George W Bush, President of the United States, Oval Office remarks with John Howard, Washington, the next day, **10 February 2003**

Taxpayer Funded Political Advertising

John Howard Lie

25

"... we will ask the Auditor-General to draw up new guidelines on what is an appropriate use of taxpayers' money in this area. There is clearly a massive difference between necessary Government information for the community and blatant Government electoral propaganda. Propaganda should be paid for by political parties."

John Howard, Press Release, "*Auditor-General to examine Government Advertising*", **5 September 1995**

The Truth:

The Howard Government never asked the Auditor-general to examine Government Advertising and they completely ignored the advertising guidelines recommended by the Auditor-General in 1998.

In the lead up to the 2004 election the government plans to spend at least \$120 million on government advertising.

"In relation to future government advertising, we will explain government policies where it is necessary. We make absolutely no apology for that . . . The truth of the matter is that all governments . . . from time to time have advertised and explained the features of new policies."

John Howard, *Question Without Notice, Hansard*, **22 June 2004**

Public Service Jobs

John Howard Lie #

26

“Our plans . . . will involve not replacing . . . up to 2,500 positions over the first term of a Coalition Government—a process of natural attrition with no forced redundances.”

Coalition Public Administration policy document **Election Campaign February 1996**

The Truth:

In the first term of the Howard Government, 32,400 jobs were lost.

Budget Papers, 1997–1999

Savings Bonus

John Howard Lie #

27

On a promised savings bonus:

"You get the \$1,000 savings bonus if you are 60 years or over."

". . . in addition to the pension increases, there's the saving bonus for everybody at sixty years or beyond of a thousand, an additional two thousand for self-funded retirees at pensioner age."

John Howard, Prime Minister, John Howard, interviews on *Radio 5AA*, **14 August 1998**, and *Sunday* program, *16 August 1998*

The Truth:

“It was very clear that pensioners who had income from savings of up to \$20,000 could be eligible for the \$1,000 bonus and that from \$20,000 to \$30,000, depending on their income, the bonus would alter.”

Larry Anthony, Minister for Community Services, Parliament, **28 June 2000**

". . . Almost 60 per cent of Australians have received the full \$1,000 and nearly 75 per cent of those older Australians have received \$500 or more . . .”

Larry Anthony, Minister for Community Services, Parliament, **29 November 2000**