

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Friday 29 August 2014



### New exhibition gives Howard perspective on Australia's 'greatest PM'

Who would a former prime minister nominate as Australia's greatest prime minister? For John Howard, the answer is Robert Menzies.

In a first for a national collecting institution, a former prime minister has guest-curated a new exhibition which will help mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Robert Menzies' first term as prime minister.

***Menzies: By John Howard*** will be officially opened on Wednesday 3 September 2014, 10:30am at Old Parliament House.

This exhibition will give visitors to the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House an exclusive insight into the man who became Australia's longest-serving prime minister – Robert Menzies.

As guest-curator, former prime minister John Howard shares his personal reflections and insights into Menzies' short, intense first term (1939-41), exploring these politically-charged years.

"He was given a tremendously difficult hand. He arrived as prime minister when his government was running out of steam and the world was sliding towards war," said Mr Howard, who reflects that Menzies went on to become Australia's greatest prime minister after his short and tumultuous first term.

"He had a compelling speaking style. He was the greatest political orator I've heard, and I say that without hesitation," said Mr Howard.

Ms Daryl Karp, Director of the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House said that this exhibition is a great example of how the museum is doing things differently.

"We are leading a fresh new role for the museum that celebrates the spirit of Australian democracy by inviting new voices in to share our story. ***Menzies: By John Howard*** is a great example of this, and in our upcoming exhibition, *Power of 1: Does your voice count in a modern world?*, it will be the everyday voice who curates the experience," said Ms Karp.

"Mr John Howard has the unique ability to be able to provide personal insight into a life that drew many parallels to his own, and a man he admired greatly."

Items on display include significant items from private and national collections including the Prime Minister's desk, personal diaries and films from his 1941 trip to meet with Churchill and Roosevelt. A number of items on display have been loaned by the Menzies family and have not been seen in public before.

***Menzies: By John Howard*** will be on display until September 2015.

Old Parliament House, home to the Museum of Australian Democracy is open to the public daily from 9am–5pm with a range of exhibitions, events and public programs, plus café. For more details visit [moadoph.gov.au](http://moadoph.gov.au)

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Media opportunities at the launch include:

- Speech and interview with former prime minister John Howard, guest-curator ***Menzies: by John Howard***
- Speech and interview with Ms Daryl Karp, Director, Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House
- Speech by Senator the Hon George Brandis QC

Other items to note for Wednesday 3 September 2014:

- Speeches can be recorded
- A splitter system will be available to record audio on the day
- Media preview and photo opportunity of the exhibition space (no visitors) from 9–10am
- Interviews will take place in the Country Party Room from 11:15am–12:15pm