



MEDIA RELEASE

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And this is John Howard's Numbers Man?

Finance Minister Nick Minchin yesterday did more damage to his credibility as John Howard's numbers man.

Senator Minchin's claim yesterday that public service numbers have decreased over the past 11 years does not take into account the effect of privatisation on public sector numbers.

Telstra alone employed almost 90,000 people when it was privatised. Add to this the people employed by other Government enterprises that have been privatised since 1996, including Australian National and the Federal Airports Corporation, and the Senator Minchin's ability to do the numbers for John Howard has to be seriously questioned.

On Senator Minchin's watch as Finance Minister, employment in the general government sector has increased by **26 per cent**. The cost of running Government has increased almost **50 per cent** or **\$16 billion** per year.

Senator Minchin's deceit is designed to cover up the blowout in public service costs under the Howard Government. It is not the first time he has got into a mess with claims on spending. In recent months his statements on Labor's spending have been just as unreliable:

- On 17 April 2007 the Finance Minister claimed Labor's commitments totalled **\$20.1 billion**;
- By 8 August 2007 he claimed that those commitment totalled **\$14.2 billion**; and
- On 27 August 2007 the Prime Minister claimed Labor's spending amounted to **\$4.6 billion**.

Over a four month period Howard Government claims regarding Labor's spending miraculously fell by over **400 per cent**.

Senator Minchin clearly struggles when dealing with simple facts and basic arithmetic.

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