

Defeated Australian PM clears his desk

by UPI

CANBERRA, Australia -- Outgoing Australian Prime Minister John Howard spent Tuesday cleaning out his office and readying it for the country's new leader, Kevin Rudd. Howard's Liberal-National coalition was soundly beaten by Rudd's Labor Party in the general election Saturday -- a victory that meant Labor now controls the Australian federal government in Canberra as well as all six state governments and territories. Rudd said he hoped to finalize his new Cabinet by Thursday and be sworn in by Monday. The new prime minister also said he intended to consult with aboriginal leaders over their long-standing demand for an apology by Australia for the "stolen generation." This referred to government action more than 60 years ago when aboriginal children were taken from their parents in desolate outback communities and put into foster care with white urban families. Indigenous leaders have stated any apology will be meaningless with Rudd using the word "sorry" and the new prime minister saying he intends to consult with them to ensure "the content will be real, meaningful and substantive."

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