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## Exclusive Brethren an extreme cult: Rudd

Federal Labor leader Kevin Rudd has labelled the Exclusive Brethren as an extremist cult.

He also called on Prime Minister John Howard to reveal what was discussed when he met its senior members recently.

Mr Rudd said he had real concerns about the impact of the Brethren on Australian communities and, unlike Mr Howard, he refused to meet with its members.

"I believe this is an extremist cult and sect," Mr Rudd told reporters in Adelaide.

"I also believe that it breaks up families, I also believe that there are real problems with the provision of modern education to kids under their system where they, for example, are not given full range of access to information technology."

Mr Rudd's comment followed a report that Mr Howard had met senior members of the sect, including a man under federal police scrutiny for his spending on the prime minister's 2004 election campaign.

Mr Howard said there was nothing wrong with him meeting with members of community groups, including the Exclusive Brethren, but deflected questions about whether the sect was providing election funding for the Liberal Party.

Mr Rudd said Mr Howard should detail the content of his most recent meeting with the Exclusive Brethren.

"Mr Howard has a responsibility to level with the Australian public," he said.

"How much money has the Exclusive Brethren given the Liberal Party, what was the content of his most recent meeting with the ... so-called supreme leader of the Exclusive Brethren and what undertakings have been given.

"Remember, the exclusive Brethren are currently under investigation of the Australian Federal Police concerning previous election activities.

"The Australian public deserves some answers on all of this, Mr Howard needs to be fair dinkum with the Australian community rather than pretending 'they are some other group'.

"They are not. They split families and I am deeply concerned about their impact on communities across Australia."

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