



PRIME MINISTER

5/93

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, MP

MR FISCHER AND THE MABO JUDGEMENT

The remarks made by the Leader of the National Party on Western Australian radio yesterday so distort the known realities of the Mabo Judgement, Australian history and the contemporary ambitions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, one is obliged to conclude that Mr Fischer may have intended them as an incitement to fear and resentment.

Eleven days into the United Nations International Year of the World's Indigenous People this is Mr Fischer's contribution.

Mr Fischer knows that there is no serious attempt on the part of Aboriginal Australians to re-claim all of Australia, nor any desire to threaten vital national industries, and he should have made that clear to the interviewer who suggested it.

Mr Fischer also knows that there is no "guilt industry" in Australia, and to suggest one exists is a slur on the decent concern, loyalty and good will of the vast majority of Australians.

As I said in December in our effort to find fair, rational and just solutions to this historic problem, guilt is not a constructive emotion. But a recognition of historic wrongs and continuing injustice is not guilt. A desire to see justice done and an abiding care for this country and all its people is not guilt. The belief that the good name of Australia should not be sullied by prejudice and discrimination is not guilt.

Rather, these are sentiments which will advance Australia's cause and raise the hopes and self-esteem of all of us.

Mr Sattler's attitudes are his own business, but a national leader like Mr Fischer should never have conspired in supporting and disseminating them.

In this International Year of the World's Indigenous People, and in this decade when Australia seeks reconciliation with the first Australians, he should withdraw them.

It is equally to be hoped that the Coalition Leader, Dr Hewson, will totally dissociate the Opposition from the views expressed by Mr Fischer, especially given Mr Fischer's assertion that his Liberal colleagues will "go all the way" with his views.

CANBERRA

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