



PRIME MINISTER

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

MABO AND LEADERSHIP

The Mabo issue has exposed again John Hewson's wanton lack of leadership.

Threatened by his Western Australian Parliamentary supporters, John Hewson is failing absolutely to show any leadership on Mabo - while the Western Australian Premier says he will legislate to actually extinguish native title, to abolish it.

At the same time as Dr Hewson sits mure on the issue, Peter Reith attacks the legitimacy of the High Court and threatens it, reportedly saying if it continues to behave this way it will be reformed, and arguing any preference for Aborigines in the Native Title Bill should be struck out.

Reith is sharply at odds with the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party Dr Wooldridge who has indicated his support for the High Court decision and its legislative ramifications.

Dr Hewson is presiding over a divided Liberal Party and a divided coalition on Mabo.

Without a shred of courage or decency he is leaving the field to the Courts and the Reiths for fear of his own job and the position Western Australian Liberals might take.

Premier Court has challenged John Hewson to stick with him on Mabo and that means conniving in the wholesale extinguishment of Native Title.

When will John Hewson stand up and be counted.

Is Dr Hewson's only role to be that of spoiler - a role he is working hard to perfect.

CYPRUS

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