



# PRIME MINISTER

133/93

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

**THE GOVERNMENT'S MABO LEGISLATION**

Those trying to turn the screws on the Government in relation to the Native Title Bill, are playing into the hands of the opponents of justice for Aboriginal people and a sound and workable outcome on Mabo.

The Bill is principled, balanced and workable. It is the product of a process of analysis, consultation and negotiation as thorough as any undertaken.

The Bill reflects an agreement reached with Aboriginal representatives. Mr Mansell and others participated at various times in the process. The door was never closed to them. As far as the Government is aware, the Aboriginal representatives the Government negotiated with stand by the agreement reached.

The Government certainly does.

The Bill will be passed this week by the House of Representatives. It will then go to the Senate. The Government will be urging passage in the Senate before the Parliament rises.

The Government is obviously prepared to consider proposals which improve the Bill. But it will not accept any proposal which is outside the policy parameters to which the Government is totally committed.

The Government has asked the Green Senators for their proposed "holding" Bill. They have not yet been able to provide it. The Government's initial view, on the basis of legal advice, is that the concept is unlikely to be feasible.

I met this morning with several Aboriginal representatives who put forward various proposals for change to the Bill. I made it completely clear that a number of these were simply unacceptable.

For example, vesting of mineral rights in native title holders and a right of veto over developments on native title lands cannot be accepted.

Mr Rob Riley amongst many others, was urging as late as this week that the Bill be passed by the Senate expeditiously. Mr Riley should heed his own advice, as should Mr Mansell and the rest of this group. It is the same advice coming from most other respected Aboriginal leaders.

In short, the Government has a Bill before the Parliament and will be pressing for its passage.

**CANBERRA**

24 November 1993