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PRIME MINISTER

41/95

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

MR COURT'S PROPOSED INQUIRY

The inquiry into the Easton affair proposed by the Premier of Western Australia, Mr Court, and his Liberal Party should be abandoned because it is a flagrant abuse of the State's statutory processes.

This proposed action would breach an important protocol of Australian politics - that the judicial process should not be abused in the pursuit of purely political objectives.

No self-respecting judge, former judge, Queen's Counsel or barrister should consent to be party to this flagrant abuse of the system. The politically-motivated inquiry threatened by Mr Court should be treated with the utter contempt it deserves.

Mr Court and the WA Liberals know that in relation to the Easton matter, no present or past member of the Western Australian Parliament committed any illegality. Nor was there any maladministration, or fraudulent use of taxpayers' money. The tabling of the Easton petition has already been reviewed twice by the State Parliament, and the debate over it is now purely a political matter.

There are absolutely no objective grounds upon which Mr Court can justify the provision of public funds, and the abuse of the statutory process, for the inquiry he now proposes.

It is an improper ploy, and such an inquiry would devalue the integrity of any person who agreed to conduct it.

**CANBERRA
5 MAY 1995**