

MEDIA STATEMENT

Hon Dr Carmen Lawrence MP

**Shadow Minister for Reconciliation, Aboriginal &
Torres Strait Islander Affairs; the Arts, and Status of
Women**

Federal Member for Fremantle

9 August 2002

NATIVE TITLE

I am disappointed at the High Court's Native Title test case decision yesterday. The fruits of the Howard Government's 10-point plan are now on full show. Labor and others at the time said this represented an erosion of native title rights. The Full Court has now confirmed this fear.

On the face of it, these decisions appear to further limit native title, confirming the reduction of the strength and extent of such rights. They represent a significant erosion of the title envisaged in the original Native Title Act.

The Howard Government should now take a step back, exercise some leadership and repair the damage it has done.

In the meantime, we encourage community leaders, State Governments, and industry to negotiate meaningful land use agreements to provide a base for Indigenous economic and cultural life.

Contact: Amber Jade Sanderson - 08 9335 8555