Teachers fear retribution for speaking out

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Student behaviour is a problem across the system and teachers at Nightcliff High School need to be supported not ignored CLP Leader Terry Mills said today.

The fact that the Opposition has now been given a copy of a letter written to Government six months ago by teachers from Nightcliff High School demonstrates that after six months the teachers have given up on getting any help from the Martin Government.

Mr Mills said the letter pleading for help about the problems of poor leadership, low staff morale and a breakdown in student discipline detailed a number of alarming facts – in particular the fear of retribution if the teachers are identified for speaking out.

And equally disturbing is a suggestion today in the media that because the teachers have turned to the Opposition it “means a swift and just resolution is unlikely.”

“This only serves to reinforce why there is a climate of fear among those who dare to speak out,” Mr Mills said.

In their November letter to the Martin Government the teachers wrote:

“It suffices to say that the school is verging on chaos due to poor leadership… Many of the staff feel vulnerable and threatened, suffering low morale as students, especially many year 8,9’s and 10’s, are basically allowed to do as they wish to the extent that it could be considered negligent as well as educationally and socially irresponsible. As a result, teacher absenteeism is high and staff no longer bothers reporting many incidents as they believe they will be seen as being at fault and little to no action will be taken. In brief, there is no leadership and people who speak out are victimised and/or are treated as ineffectual teachers…. In terms of administration, the school is just stumbling along…Some of us wanted to write letters to the Editor and the Shadow Minister of Education, but this would perhaps put the school in the public eye. We have decided to write to the local member first. It has been the most stressful year of teaching most of us has endured…We do not wish to crucify anyone, just hope for your involvement to help bring some order so that the same situation does not continue to occur next year.”

“The Martin Government deserves to be condemned for inaction on this issue. No wonder youth crime is increasing. We have a problem of discipline and a breakdown of law and order in a school and the Government has lacked the leadership to tackle it.
"The alarm bells should have been ringing six months ago for the Martin Government. Violence is on the increase in our community and all too often we are seeing teenage school children caught up in it.

“What more will it take for the Martin Government to listen. There is a breakdown in discipline, leadership and morale. Students are petitioning the Government, six months ago teachers pleaded with the Government for help.


“An independent arbitrator needs to be appointed to quickly resolve this crisis in the Nightcliff High School for the sake of the teachers, students and all concerned.”

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