SEX ABUSE REPORT: MARTIN’S AIMS NOT ACHIEVED

The Territory Opposition has welcomed the release of the long-awaited Report into child sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities, but is concerned it lacks specific recommendations on how to immediately reduce the sexual abuse that is plaguing Aboriginal communities.

“There is nothing in the Report that deals with how to overcome the fear victims and others have about exposing child abusers in remote communities,” says Jodeen Carney, Leader of the Opposition.

“People reporting child sex abuse and giving evidence in legal proceeding are often subject to threats and intimidation by the perpetrators.

As the Chief Minister said when announcing the inquiry: “We’ve got to break through the fear and shame and the violence we see about child sex abuse in our communities and what I’m announcing today is an Inquiry to show us how to do just that”.

“That is one thing that hasn’t been achieved by the Inquiry,” says Ms Carney.

“The Report’s emphasis on improving education standards and restricting the flow of alcohol are very important measures but won’t, of themselves, address the very high incidence of sexual abuse occurring right now.

‘I believe the Report could and should have proposed short-term measures to complement its emphasis on long-term solutions.

“We need longer gaol terms for child sex offenders, the removal of accused sex offenders from Aboriginal communities and a commitment that the Territory Government won’t deal with Aboriginal communities where convicted child sex offenders sit in positions of power.

“I’m also disappointed that the Chief Minister is still unable to indicate which of the Report’s recommendations her Government will be implementing.

“She’s had the Report for six weeks but still can’t commit to a plan of action.

“The Chief Minister seems unable to grasp the urgency of this issue.

“The children need the Government to take action now.”

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