WHY WON'T GOVERNMENT GIVE CONVICTION RATES FOR CHILD ABUSE?

“The Northern Territory Government has refused to provide the apprehension and conviction rates for the indigenous and non-indigenous child abuse offenders,” says Shadow Minister for Child Protection, Jodeen Carney.

“In August last year, I asked in Parliament:

'It is well known that there is widespread under-reporting of child abuse. Can you advise the Chamber, in any event, of the apprehension and conviction rates for indigenous and non-indigenous offenders in the Northern Territory.'

“The Minister for Child Protection, Ms Scrymgour said:

‘...I do not have those numbers. I can certainly provide those numbers to her...' (22/8/07: Hansard)

“In February this year I wrote to the Minister asking again for the information about apprehension and conviction rates.

“I have still not received a reply.

“Government Ministers consistently claim that inroads are being made into child abuse and convictions of child abusers.

“When the Government finally released its “Closing the Gap” package, much was made about how it would improve aspects of life for Aboriginal women and children in particular. Yet, the Government either does not have, or refuses to provide, the current rates of apprehension and conviction for those who assault children.

“How can Government measure the effectiveness of any plans or programs it pursues in this area if it is so secretive about the starting point, namely, current conviction rates?.

“Surely Government has details of the conviction rates for child abuse. If not, then the question has to be asked as to “why”.

“Getting the information right as to the apprehension and conviction rates is important in order to measure the success or otherwise of programs, as well as to actually assess whether improvements need to be made.

“Where are the figures Minister and why won’t you release them?”

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