MILLS CALLS FOR SCHOOL VIOLENCE INQUIRY

February 07th, 2012

Opposition Leader Terry Mills has called for an inquiry into allegations of classroom assaults on teachers and students in Northern Territory schools.

Mr Mills said claims by the Australian Education Union and anecdotal reports from teachers of extreme behavior in schools should be subject to an independent investigation conducted at arm’s length from Government.

“I’m proposing a judicial officer or senior legal figure be appointed to investigate issues associated with school-based violence,” Mr Mills said.

“There is a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the extent and nature of student violence and I anticipate an investigation would go some way to clarifying the extent of the problem.

“I am aware that last year the Department of Education convened a workshop following the stabbing of a teacher in Nightcliff, but that the 11 recommendations that arose from that investigation have not been fully implemented.

“I believe there is a view within Government that extreme behaviors in schools – both targeting teachers and other students – are isolated incidents.

“However I am concerned these incidents are not isolated and that violence in schools is more widespread than is acknowledged by Government.

“Without an objective assessment that takes in the entire education system, I believe we will not be able to provide an adequate response that supports teachers, students and families.

“I hope the Government will take an important step towards tackling school violence and convene an independent inquiry as soon as possible.”

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594