17 September 2012

Statement from the Australian Labor Party NT

The Northern Territory ALP will refer several extremely serious allegations of breaches of the Electoral Act from the recent Northern Territory election to the police and are calling for a full Judicial Inquiry.

The alleged breaches include:

- Ten signed Statutory Declarations declaring that an Electoral Commission interpreter was instructing people to vote for the CLP inside the Wadeye booth.
- A Statutory Declaration declaring that an Electoral Commission official was instructing people to vote for the CLP inside the Nyripi booth. The ALP understands that two officials were suspended by the Electoral Commission in relation to this incident.

The ALP has been informed of many irregularities across several remote electorates but most people were unwilling to risk the potential retribution resulting from putting their name to a Statutory Declaration.

If proven, these allegations are serious breaches of the Electoral Act. The ALP has released legal advice that outlines the serious nature of the allegations and supports an Inquiry.

Such breaches undermine the democracy of the Northern Territory. Nothing less than a full independent Judicial Inquiry under the Inquiries Act is required for faith in our democratic system to be maintained.

It is already clear that the CLP conducted a dirty tricks campaign in the bush. Such tactics included promises to sell heavy beer and telling people that it was the Labor Government who introduced the Intervention.

However these written allegations are about much more than dirty tricks, they are about serious criminal activity and corruption of the democratic process. The current allegations relate to Wadeye and Nyripi, but it is not clear if they are part of a wider orchestrated campaign.

The Electoral Commission should immediately request an Independent Judicial Inquiry that examines what occurred, who was involved, how widespread the activity was and how to prevent it ever happening again.

If the CLP Government has nothing to hide they should give the inquiry their full support.

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