MEDIA RELEASE

Delia Lawrie & Kon Vatskalis

20 November 2013

Giles Silent on Indonesia Crisis

Leader of the Opposition, Delia Lawrie, today called on Chief Minister Adam Giles to urge Prime Minister Tony Abbott to apologise to the Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and his wife Ani Yudhoyono.

Ms Lawrie said the relationship between the Northern Territory and Indonesia was critical and the spy scandal diplomatic disaster needed to be resolved swiftly.

“I agree with former Foreign Affairs Minister Bob Carr that the Abbott Government should apologise immediately,” Ms Lawrie said.

The Shadow Minister for Asian Relations and Trade, Kon Vatskalis, said Indonesia is vital to the Territory economy and our future prosperity.

“Why is our Chief Minister silent on an incident that has led to the recall of Indonesia’s Ambassador to Australia yet he was very vocal on tensions arising out of the live cattle trade,” Mr Vatskalis said.

“Is it one rule for a Federal Labor government and another rule for their Liberal mates in Canberra? The hypocrisy is rank and our relationship with Indonesia needs to be above party politics.”

Ms Lawrie said the Northern Territory was extraordinarily fortunate and honoured to have the Indonesian President choose Darwin as the location for the first senior bi-lateral meetings on Australian soil.

“We need to strengthen our relationship with Indonesia and an apology is absolutely appropriate,” she said.

“The Territory has a long-standing wonderful relationship with Indonesia so let us honour that by a bi-partisan call for an apology and then do everything we can to assist in the rebuilding of relationships.

“This is vital to the opportunities that exist between our jurisdictions in trade, education, tourism, culture and defence just to name a few.”

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