Terry Mills  
Leader of the Opposition

Education Minister 'Gutless for failing Gary Harper'  
7 May 2004

The CLP Leader, Terry Mills, today branded the Minister for Education, Syd Stirling, as ‘gutless' for his betrayal of Nightcliff High School teacher Gary Harper.

“The Minister and his Department have turned their back on Gary Harper, in a display that can only be described as weak and gutless. They have let down Mr Harper, the parents and children of Nightcliff High School and school teachers across the territory,' Mr Mills said.

“The Minister has sold all teachers in the Territory down the drain, which is criminal considering his past career in teaching and first hand knowledge of the pressures and challenges that they face.

The problems that exist at Nightcliff High School are not of Mr Harper's making and an independent look at the facts of the situation will prove this. Gary Harper's colleagues and students place their trust and respect in him, but unfortunately, this is not backed up by the Minister and his Department.”

Mr Harper has been transferred away from his teaching role of 23 years to office work, a move that has astounded parents and children at Nightcliff High School , as the school continues to implode with problems of discipline and low staff morale.

“It has now also been revealed that Mr Harper may have been transferred in contravention to Public Sector Employment and Management Act ,” Mr Mills said.

“It has been publicly stated the Chief Executive of the Education Department used his power under Section 35 of the Act to move Mr Harper, however a review of this section reveals that it can only be used for operational requirements and must be done in conjunction with the employee – and both of these provisions appear to have been breached.

The Minister must act immediately and personally investigate the treatment of Mr Harper by the school and the education department. If due process has not been followed, Mr Harper must be re-instated immediate and given a full and un-reserved apology from the Minister.”
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