Gillard Gets It Right Martin Gets It Wrong

In a heated exchange in the Federal Parliament yesterday Julia Gillard responded angrily to suggestions that ALP members were using overcrowding in remote communities as an excuse for the rape of children. She said, “No member of the (Federal) opposition has ever or would ever say something like that. That implication ought to be withdrawn. It is a disgrace.”

Yesterday in answer to a question from the ABC, on that very topic, in Darwin the Chief Minister said, “If you’ve got 16 to 20 people in a house, you are setting up the circumstances for that to happen.”

The Territory Leader of the Opposition today criticised the Chief Minister for again trying to back away from her responsibilities to address physical and sexual violence against women and children in remote communities.

“It’s important to remember that Doctor Nannette Rogers talked about the high level of male Aboriginal violence in communities. That is what has sparked this national debate and its not appropriate that matters such as housing be used dodge this core issue.

“We must remember that we are trying to protect women and children from assault and rape at the hands of violent Aboriginal men.

“It is clear that Mal Brough wants to respond to these issues as law and order issues. The Chief Minister wants to make the issue a housing issue. This is all about extracting money from the Federal Government and less about protecting victims.

“The problem for the Chief Minister is that Julia Gillard has got it right. Anyone who suggests that housing is a direct cause of child rape is using a disgraceful tactic. A rapist is a criminal and has no excuse even if they do live in overcrowded conditions.

“Mal Brough is correct in trying to deal with law and order first. This is consistent with the plan that I recommended to the Chief Minister.

“To simply build houses without looking at law and order first is to invite the destruction of those new houses.

Media Contact:  John Elferink  -  Email: john.elferink@nt.gov.au  -  Ph: 08 8901 4184  (m) 0418 506 633