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NO DIGNITY FOR VICTIMS AT STATE FUNERAL

“It is inappropriate for former Labor Senator, Bob Collins, to be afforded a state funeral when credible allegations of serious sexual abuse of children remain against his name,” says Terry Mills, Acting Opposition Leader.

“I’ve carefully weighed the arguments regarding whether it is appropriate for Bob Collins to have a state funeral and on balance there are too many allegations from too many victims over too long a period of time for it to proceed.

“For the alleged victims of Bob Collins it must be sickening to see the man who they believe abused them treated as a dignitary.

“I’m just as sure victims of child sex abuse everywhere will be shocked and angered that a prominent politician accused of repeated abuse of multiple victims over a thirty year period would be lauded at a state funeral.

“Equally, I don’t believe the interests of the family of Bob Collins will be served by this decision to hold a state funeral.

“Innocent until proven guilty has been the refrain of those defending the decision to provide Bob Collins with a state funeral and a private wake for selected mourners. Yet our prisons are full of people on remand awaiting trial for offences far less serious than the allegations made against Bob Collins.

“It is also worth considering that Bob Collin’s would not have been able to continue as a Minister of the Crown if these charges had been laid when he was in office.

“It is extremely difficult to secure a conviction for child sex abuse and the fact the police decided to charge the former Labor Senator indicates substantial evidence of the abuse existed.

“With the Northern Territory struggling to come to grips with the dark stain of child abuse, particularly in remote indigenous communities, it is pertinent that indigenous Territorians are amongst Bob Collin’s accusers.

“Holding a state funeral for a politician who is the alleged perpetrator of child sex abuse will do little to encourage other victims of sexual abuse to come forward.

“Indeed, it sends precisely the wrong message to victims.”

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594