TERRITORY LAW PLAN TO TACKLE RACISM

Leader of the Opposition, Delia Lawrie, has today said she will seek bi-partisan support for a private member’s bill to provide protection for Territorians following the Federal Government’s move to repeal section 18C of the federal Racial Discrimination Act.

“There is no place for racial discrimination in today’s society, but the unfortunate truth is that racial discrimination and vilification occurs,” Ms Lawrie said.

“The Federal Attorney General, George Brandis, has decided to weaken federal anti-discrimination legislation that prohibits offending, insulting, humiliating, or intimidating a person based on race or ethnicity.

“At present the Northern Territory does not have anti-vilification provisions so any weakening of anti-discrimination law at the Commonwealth level will leave Territorians vulnerable.

“The Territory’s Anti-Discrimination Act currently does not address racial vilification and now needs to be amended in light of the federal government’s intentions.”

Ms Lawrie said she will be seek bi-partisan support for the effort to strengthen Territory legislation and is currently developing a Discussion Paper that will go to multicultural and legal stakeholders as well as the CLP, PUP and Independent members of our Legislative Assembly.

“This is one of those occasions where I hope we can put politics aside so that we can all do what is fair and right for Territorians,” Ms Lawrie said.

“The Northern Territory has a proud multicultural history and a harmonious society but it is important to send a clear message that under law, public discrimination will not be tolerated.

“The Federal laws have stood the test for 20 years and it is deeply disheartening to think they will be watered down. I pledge to work with multicultural and legal stakeholders on what the Territory’s racial discrimination laws should look like.

“We need to get this legislation right to protect Territorians from discrimination or vilification.”

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