Mills to Meet with Federal Education Minister Julie Bishop

The Territory Opposition will today meet with Julie Bishop the Federal Minister for Education to lobby her for an expansion of the Mutual Obligation program to include linking welfare payments to school attendance.

“The outcomes for education in remote Australia have been just awful.” Shadow Education Minister Terry Mills said today.

“The attendance rate at school in remote communities is generally pathetic and it is a small wonder that educational results are so poor when those attendance rates are so woeful.

“I am not the first person to suggest this change and I’m sure that I’m not going to be the last. I am adding my voice to this debate in the hope that if enough voices are heard then the needed change will happen.

“The concept of Mutual Obligation means what it suggests. Unless real financial pressure is brought to bear on indifferent parents then intergenerational welfare dependency will remain a self fulfilling prophecy.

“For too long people have been walking on cultural eggshells in an effort not to offend Aboriginal people particularly. Like so many good intentions this approach has brought about negative results for the kids that live in these communities.

“The time has come to stand up and say that all citizens have a responsibility to this nation and it is the responsibility of parents to make certain that their children take advantage of the opportunities that the Territory and the Country gives them so that they won’t be a burden on the Nation in the future.

“If parents aren’t prepared to do so then pressure must be brought to bear that will make them get their kids to school. The fact is that the schools are provided in these remote communities but unless the parents do their bit then nothing will change.

“I will be encouraging Julie Bishop to visit this issue as a matter of urgency because every day of delay means another child misses on the opportunities that an education gives them.”

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