



# Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory (CLANT)

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Patron: The Hon Justice Virginia Bell • President: Russell Goldflam (telephone: 040 1119020) •  
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Hon Adam Giles MLA  
Chief Minister  
Parliament House, Darwin NT 0800

22 August 2013

Dear Chief Minister

On behalf of the Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory (CLANT), I am moved to write in support of your powerful and positive statement to the Legislative Assembly last night on the pressing issue of domestic violence. You addressed the House as follows:

[T]he rate women are beaten in the Northern Territory is an absolute disgrace. We should all be ashamed of what is happening and what has happened for years. It will take us some time, from a statistical point of view, to get on top of this. We do not want to see any woman, or any man, in that position, but the numbers are completely offensive and outrageous. Police are doing their best to address the issues. This is something we have inherited. We are not talking about it in a political sense; it is completely offensive and outrageous, and we will continue to do what we can to address the issues.

One of the areas I will be focusing on is strengthening Indigenous men. It is a passion I have had for a long period of time. I have always thought Indigenous men across Australia, but in the Northern Territory - I speak generally not of all men, but Indigenous men need a greater supportive role in place, particularly those on the fringes who often succumb to elements of society where they form part of the welfare system or alcohol abuse or criminal areas. We have to put greater emphasis around these people and I will be doing more work on this into the future. It is something I will take on passionately myself and try to take on a personal ambassador role to address some of these issues. We need to get skin in the game to start to address some of these things.

Dealing with it from a political point of view and without that emotive compassion, starts to see things statistically and not get to the heart of the real problems. It is something I will take passionately.

As an active and committed White Ribbon Ambassador for several years, I share your passion about this issue, and in particular, I strongly agree with you that, firstly, it is of crucial importance to strengthen and support Indigenous men, and secondly, that this is an issue which transcends party politics. When Bess Nungarrayi Price MLA spoke so inspiringly in the House on 16 May 2013 on this issue, I also wrote to her and spoke publicly in support of her courageous stand.

CLANT recently held its fourteenth biennial conference on the theme "Victims of the System", during which several papers were delivered in a session I convened on the issue of "Women as Victims". In her presentation<sup>1</sup> to this session, Justice Jenny Blokland made the following recommendation, in line with detailed proposals previously published by lawyers from the Top End and Central Australia Women's Legal Services:

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.clant.org.au/images/images/the-bali-conference/2013/Blokland\\_ppt.pdf](http://www.clant.org.au/images/images/the-bali-conference/2013/Blokland_ppt.pdf)

**Support and develop a Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit to carry out reviews of deaths that have occurred in the context of family violence, with a mind towards reducing domestic fatalities in the Northern Territory.**

CLANT has resolved to support this proposal, which I understand is also supported by the Central Australian Family Violence and Sexual Assault Network.

I urge you to read Justice Blokland's carefully researched and formulated proposals, and to give the most serious consideration to implementing them.

Congratulations on taking this stand and committing yourself to addressing this priority issue. The establishment of a Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Unit (as already exists in several other jurisdictions) would be a significant, practical and affordable step along this road, as indeed would the other measures proposed by Justice Blokland.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Goldflam', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Russell Goldflam  
PRESIDENT, CLANT**