



Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory (CLANT)

Patron: The Hon Justice Virginia Bell • President: Russell Goldflam (telephone: 040 1119020) • Secretary: Beth Wild (GPO Box 1064, Darwin NT 0801) • ABN: 64 391 168 310 •

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The Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory is strongly committed to reducing the appalling levels of domestic violence in the Northern Territory, says Russell Goldflam, the newly elected President of the Association. Goldflam, a senior Alice Springs legal aid lawyer, has represented hundreds of clients charged with assaulting their partner or other family members, but he wishes things were otherwise.

“As workers in the justice system, whether we be prosecutors or defence (or for that matter, judges and magistrates), criminal lawyers are involved on a daily basis in sad and often horrible business. Our Association will continue to do what we can to change this”, said Goldflam. “I have been involved in the White Ribbon Day campaign now for several years as one of its Ambassadors. Each 25th November, men around Australia and indeed around the world swear never to commit, excuse or remain silent about violence against women. I also work hard alongside colleagues such as NT Australian of the Year Dr John Boffa to reduce the devastating harm caused by grog in our community. Here in the Territory, I have no doubt whatsoever that if we don’t fix the grog problem, we won’t fix the violence, and indeed, we won’t fix anything much.”

Goldflam said, “We’ve got a very long way to go, but it’s encouraging that governments at both a national, State and Territory level have recognised the problem, and are at least talking the talk. For example, the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children, endorsed recently by the Council of Australian Governments, has made the promotion of community involvement in making communities safe and free from violence as the very first of its 18 strategies. And within that strategy, it identifies the key actions of encouraging us all to speak out against violence, and to foster initiatives to reduce alcohol and drug abuse, including supporting local indigenous communities to take action against alcohol supply.”

“This week’s announcements by Federal Minister Macklin of the Intervention’s new alcohol measures are steps, but they’re just small steps, when what we urgently need are big steps. Let’s have a minimum price on grog so that nothing alcoholic is cheaper than the current price of beer. And let’s have a tax based on how much actual alcohol is in the product, to wipe out the ridiculously unfair advantage cheap and nasty cask wine producers have over all their competitors. Do that, and we’ll see an immediate, substantial and sustained reduction in grog-fuelled violence. That’s the result the Criminal Lawyers Association of the Northern Territory wants to see, because that’s the result our community desperately needs. Alternatively, we can just keep sending our young people off to gaol in ever-increasing numbers. However, we already have four and a half times the imprisonment rate of the rest of the country, and it’s growing twice as fast as the rest of the country, so this is a path down which we, as a community, simply can not afford to go”, said Goldflam.

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