



Ms Clare Martin MLA
Chief Minister
Northern Territory Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801

Dear Ms Martin

I am writing to you in my personal capacity and not in my capacity as an Australian Public Service (APS) employee. Consequently, this letter is not intended to reflect the views of the Commonwealth Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs or of the Australian Government.

It has come to my attention that on Wednesday 11 October 2006 you made a number of comments about me which were erroneous in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. Comments made about me by Syd Stirling MLA in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly on 19 October 2006 were also erroneous. I believe you and Mr Stirling have misled the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and the Australian public. I am writing to inform you and Mr Stirling of the errors and to invite you to correct the record by tabling this letter. I believe you have a responsibility to correct the record or you will be in breach of paragraph 14 of the Members' Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards, relating to the requirement for members to act honestly and to take all reasonable steps to ensure they do not mislead the public or the Assembly.

It is incorrect to say that I was an "employee of the Federal Government working in the Territory". Your Department would be able to advise you that I was employed by the Northern Territory Government as Manager of the Mutitjulu *Working Together Project* from late August 2004 until February 2006. My position was administratively located in the Department of Community Development, Sports and Cultural Affairs, and your Department had principal oversight of me. My chief manager in the Northern Territory Government was initially the Principal Policy Adviser, and then the Executive Director, of the Office of Indigenous Policy in your Department. At the beginning of my employment, the Principal Policy Adviser in the Office of Indigenous Policy in your Department accompanied me to your office in the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly and introduced me to your staff. I was also introduced to, and maintained on-going dialogue with, senior staff in your Office for Central Australia.

The memo that you wrote to Police Minister Henderson in November 2004 was not written by me. I understand that it was drafted by the Office of Indigenous Policy in your Department. I was consulted about it and provided input. Your Department advised me that a range of other Northern Territory Government agencies - including the Northern Territory Police - were also consulted about it and provided input.

You alleged that "anything that Greg Andrews presented to us we said, 'you report to the police straight away'" in relation to the reports of abuse that I made. I do recall being advised by my supervisors to report violence and threats against myself to the Police. I cannot recall being instructed by your Department or any other Northern Territory Government Department to report incidents of child abuse or violence against women to the Police.

It is incorrect to allege that I "never reported anything" to the Police about the abuse and violence occurring at Mutitjulu. I have records of my reports and the names of the officers to whom I made these reports in the Northern Territory Police and other Northern Territory Departments responsible for addressing violence and child abuse and neglect at Mutitjulu. I reported to the Yulara and Alice Springs Police allegations I heard and observations I made of criminal behavior, or evidence of it, in Mutitjulu. I met regularly with the local Police and also had discussions with senior Alice Springs Police. As a result of my reports to the Yulara-based Police, and my work with the NPY Women's Council, I was interviewed formally by Alice Springs CIB about child abuse in Mutitjulu. Together with a senior officer from your Department, I met with the Assistant Police Commissioner in Darwin and we discussed the human rights abuses occurring at Mutitjulu. I also regularly reported issues concerning child abuse and neglect to the Northern Territory Department of Health and Community Services. This Department and the Northern Territory Police were both represented at senior levels on the Working Group to which I reported. I had on-going dialogue about the problems occurring at Mutitjulu with Northern Territory public servants and police from these agencies. I have a range of documentary evidence about my reports to the Police and other Northern Territory Government officials responsible for the protection of children during my employment on the *Working Together Project*.

I did not send an anonymous fax after I left Mutitjulu. I have never sent an anonymous fax about Mutitjulu. I have never seen the fax to which you refer. I understand that it was sent by the Australian Government's Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination before I started work there. I had no knowledge that it was sent until I learnt about it in the press after the *Lateline* show went to air in June 2006.

You alleged that many of the reports I made about Mutitjulu had "no substance". Denying my statements about human rights abuses occurring at Mutitjulu repudiates the women of Central Australia whose representative forum, the NPY Women's Council, confirmed on 7 August 2006 that "the people who spoke on *Lateline* did not make up those stories ... [t]hey are not liars or mad". Denial of my reports of abuse is also inconsistent with reports made by such respected people as Nanette Rogers, Mantatjara Wilson and the Northern Territory Coroner. I was one of six people who spoke about sexual abuse of children on the *Lateline* program in June 2006.

I first learnt of the human rights abuses occurring at Mutitjulu - including [REDACTED] from your Department in late August 2004. During my induction period in the job I was briefed at senior levels by officers from your Department. They emphasised to me [REDACTED]. Your Department advised me that it was concerned that [REDACTED]. It advised me that a trigger for the establishment of the *Working Together Project* had been [REDACTED].

Assertions about the lack of credibility of my statements concerning the human rights abuses occurring in Central Australia are inconsistent with direct advice I have received from senior Northern Territory Police. As early as September 2004, I was advised by a senior Northern Territory Government Police officer that Mutitjulu [REDACTED]. I have documentary evidence of this conversation.

When I first I started working at Mutitjulu, the Director of Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park advised a senior officer from your Department and my wife and me [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I have documentary evidence of this meeting.

In October 2004 I was advised by your advisor Jane Lloyd that [REDACTED]. I have documentary evidence of this conversation.

My statements on *Lateline* in June 2006 were consistent with the evidence that I gave - both in writing and verbally - to the Northern Territory Coroner during his 2005 inquest into the deaths of two petrol sniffers in Mutitjulu. I consulted widely in the preparation of my submission to the Coroner and shared drafts of my submission with your Department and other members of the *Working Together Project* (including the Police) before I provided it to the Coroner. This consultation included seeking input on the degree of human rights abuses and allowing reasonable critique of my submission's content. The Office of Indigenous Policy in your Department advised me that it supported my submission. I was invited by your Department to a range of meetings in Darwin prior to the Coroner's hearings. A senior officer from your Department took me to meet a solicitor with the Northern Territory Department of Justice who was preparing the Northern Territory Government's evidence to the Coroner. I was advised by the Department of Justice that my submission was "excellent". I have documentary evidence of this meeting. After my appearance in the witness box during the Coronial inquest, your Department advised me that it supported the oral evidence I gave.

In its own submission to the Coroner of 24 August 2005, the Northern Territory Government submitted that, "the Coroner should accept as credible the evidence of Mr Gregory Andrews". The Northern Territory Government's submission to the Coroner also argued that my evidence was consistent with that of other credible witnesses such as the NPY Women's Council and CAYLUS. Your Government submitted to the Coroner that my "evidence was broadly supported by Ms Vicki Gillick, Mr Blair MacFarland and Mr Tristan Ray".

I have never used the term 'paedophile ring' to describe the human rights abuses occurring in Central Australia. The only people on the *Lateline* program who discussed the question of paedophile rings were Jane Lloyd and the former community doctor, Geoff Stewart.

Your claim that my performance was "very disappointing" contradicts the submission of your own Government to the Coroner of 24 August 2005. Your Government submitted that, "the Coroner should comment and commend Mr Andrews for his apparent rapport with the community and the advances he has made steering the *Working Together Project*". It also contradicts the Coroner's own independent findings which were published on 10 October 2005. The Northern Territory Coroner said, "I have rarely met a more qualified, committed and emotionally and culturally supportive advisor in terms of Aboriginal substance abuse problems than Mr Andrews. His work is simply outstanding".

Your claim that my performance managing the *Working Together Project* was "very disappointing" contradicts direct feedback I received from your Department. At the end of my tenure, the Executive Director of the Office of Indigenous Policy in your Department wrote to me thanking me for my "tireless work in relation to the Mutitjulu

Working Together Project” and acknowledging that the “significant progress” made under the project had been “in no small part due to [my] own energetic efforts to assist the community and various government agencies to identify and confront a number of issues that are critical for the future well being of all community members at Mutitjulu”. He also said my departure would “create a significant gap and consequent challenge for all project partners”. I have kept this letter.

Reflecting your Department’s positive view of my performance managing the *Working Together Project*, the Executive Director of the Office of Indigenous Policy in your Department encouraged me to apply for and then offered me a Principal Policy Adviser position in your Department in late 2005.

In relation to Mr Stirling’s statement to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly of 19 October 2006 that I am a “staffer to Minister Brough”, you and Mr Stirling should be aware that I am an employee of the Australian Government’s Department of Families Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. I have never held a ‘political’ or staffer position with the Australian Government. Mr Stirling’s other comment that I am a “lying little grub” was infantile and distasteful. It is not what I would expect of a representative of the people. It reflects badly on Mr Stirling and on the Northern Territory Government.

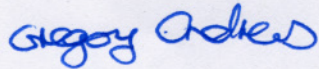
In the Northern Territory, too many people are speaking in whispers about the violence against women and children. They are afraid of being overheard by those perpetrating the abuse. They are troubled that those who should be listening are not. They live in fear of retribution from the perpetrators of abuse or those who have vested interests in maintaining the status quo and are unwilling to acknowledge and address the suffering.

During my time in the Northern Territory, I found that once I had slowly built the confidence of people, information began to flow. Everything I reported was based on what people shared with me or what I saw myself. Denigration of those who speak out against abuse is a condemnation of the victims. It sends a message to all Australians - black and white - that if people speak out against sexual abuse, they will be punished and publicly humiliated. The allegations I made over a long period about what was occurring at Mutitjulu are not to my “enduring shame” as you contend. The denial and attacks on my integrity have strengthened my determination to stand up for the rights of the victims. I stand by everything I have said.

A number of vested interest holders have promulgated a range of false and defamatory material about me in relation to this matter. This has diverted attention from the important issue at hand. It is disappointing that you have contributed to that. Misinformation, vilification and defamation of me has also put the personal safety and health of me and my family at risk. I am also disappointed about that. Tabling this letter and correcting the record is not only necessary for you to rectify a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards, but it will also reflect that you are prepared to exercise some leadership on the important issue of protecting women and children from violence in the Northern Territory.

I note that the Assembly next sits on 28 to 30 November 2006. I look forward to hearing from you by then.

Yours sincerely



Gregory Andrews

C/o GPO Box 172
Canberra ACT 2601

8 November 2006

CC: Mr Syd Stirling
Minister for Justice and Attorney General
Northern Territory Legislative Assembly
GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801