



MEDIA RELEASE

Ken Vowles

SHADOW MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS POLICY



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SCULLION COMMENTS A SLAP IN THE FACE FOR BUSH TERRITORIANS

Shadow Minister for Indigenous Policy Ken Vowles said today that comments by Senator Nigel Scullion showed how the CLP has completely abandoned the bush at a National and Territory level.

Mr Vowles said Senator Scullion's statement that he saw no problem with Indigenous Territorians staying on work for the dole programs for generations showed the CLP had no intention of developing regional economies.

"Senator Scullion's astounding comments show the CLP has put the bush in the 'too hard' basket.

"For him to say there is nothing wrong with people being on work for dole programs forever and to brush off remote communities by saying there is no economy is appalling.

"He doesn't recognise there are opportunities to develop regional economies in the Territory but it means working in a real partnership with local people and the land councils.

"As an example there are caring for country and ranger programs that provide real employment and skills development on country, but Senator Scullion doesn't recognise that.

"The Territory CLP and the Federal Liberal Governments need to abandon their approach of taking away people's rights to land as a pre-requisite to development.

"Labor is developing policies that will see real jobs opportunities in remote communities but we won't be taking away people's land rights to do this.

"We will work in partnership with local communities and land councils to grow and support local initiatives to develop stronger regions with decent housing and real jobs."

Mr Vowles said Senator Scullion should be apologising to Indigenous Territorians for his comments that compared Aboriginal people to cave dwellers and animals.

"I was shocked when I read his statement that: 'Many of my communities live on the floor, it is like a cave. I think that one of the characteristics of civilisation must be that you don't have to eat at the same level as your animals.'

"If Senator Scullion is so concerned about improving living conditions in remote communities he needs to get on with improving housing.

"He may want to ask his CLP Government colleagues why they have scaled back on their original commitment to spend \$41 million on remote area housing in the coming financial year, under the National Partnership on Remote Indigenous Housing.

"That has been slashed to \$8.8million due to the CLP's incompetence and bungling."

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