

Coalition to oppose NT intervention changes

By Adam Cartmill and Julian Drape

The federal Coalition will oppose any Government move to soften welfare controls in Northern Territory Aboriginal communities.

A federal review of the NT intervention has recommended an end to a blanket income management system, under which all Aboriginal welfare recipients' payments are heavily controlled.

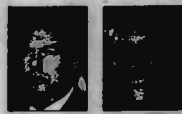
A key plank of the intervention to stamp out child sex abuse, income management aims to ensure welfare money is spent on essentials, instead of alcohol, drugs and gambling.

The review, headed by West Australian Peter Yu, said income management should only apply to families whose children did not attend school or had been reported to child protection authorities.

But Opposition indigenous affairs spokesman Tony Abbott said that would not be workable and would "fatally undermine the intervention" launched last June by the Howard government.

The Rudd Government does not have bipartisan support for ending the current system," Mr Abbott said yesterday. "The review board wants quarantine reformed because it thinks it's a collective imposition based on race. Wrong. It was based on the circumstances of remote NT townships."

The review also recommended the Racial Discrimination Act be reinstated, and for traditional owners to be compensated for the compulsory acquisition of their land. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Com-



INDIGENOUS REVIEW: Tony Abbott and Jenny Macklin.

missioner Tom Calma said the Government should immediately adopt the review's recommendations.

"I implore the Government to take note of the review board's key observation that respect for human rights is critical to building and maintaining sustainable, healthy and safe remote indigenous communities," he said.

The Greens said Labor should act immediately to end "the racist policies of the Howard government." "It is time we actually did focus on finally ending the disadvantage Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory face and stop blaming them and start addressing their needs," Greens senator Rachel Siewert said.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin said the Government remained committed to the intervention and would respond to the report soon.

Under the intervention, the Commonwealth also abolished the permit system, boosted police numbers and imposed alcohol and pornography bans. AAP

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VOCAL: Rowdy pro-Tamil protesters outside the National Press Club yesterday oppose the visit of Sri Lanka Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama. Photo: GARY SCHAFER

Tamil protest confronts Sri Lankan minister

By James Misaola

About 300 protesters from Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney converged on the National Press Club yesterday to protest against Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Rohitha Bogollagama's visit. Waving placards that said "Don't kill Tamils" and "Recognise our cry for freedom", the crowd gathered from 11am.

As the delegation arrived, the crowd cried, "We need press freedom." "Don't kill journalists" and "Tamils want democracy" at the motorcade.

Although vocal, the crowd was well behaved.

The protests were in part fuelled by Foreign Minister Stephen Smith's announcement on Monday that the Rudd Government would consider listing the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the organisation leading the fighting against the majority Sinhala government in Sri Lanka, as a terrorist organisation.

The Federal Government has also called on the Sri Lankan Government to do more to bring about a political solution to its decades-old civil war. But the move to list the Tamil

Tigers is not popular with Australia's 30,000-strong Tamil community.

The chairman of the Australian Federation of Tamil Associations and one of the protest's organisers, Raga Ragavan, said the crowd had gathered to send a message to the Federal Government - and to tell the Australian people - what was "really going on" in Sri Lanka.

He said the erosion of press freedoms and the murder of journalists meant the world did not have a clear picture of what the Sri Lankan Government had done to Tamils in the north of that country.

"There is war going on in Sri Lanka. The Tamils want to be recognised. We have the right of self-determination... we should rule ourselves," he said.

"We want the Tamils to have their own nation, and to live in dignity... Mr Bogollagama has described the Tamil Tigers as a 'universal terrorist organisation'."

"It is to be banned in the United States of America, it is banned in Canada, it is banned in 27 countries in the European Union, it is banned in the United Kingdom and also it is banned in India," he said.

IN BRIEF

Rees promises cull
A fifth of all senior executive positions in the NSW public sector will be axed, saving taxpayers up to \$34 million a year. Premier Nathan Rees told a budget estimates committee yesterday that 171 executive positions with average salaries of about \$200,000 would go as he dealt with a \$1 billion a year revenue shortfall. He said the public sector was "top heavy". "I've made it clear the Government would tighten its belt," he said. "I've done it in my own office and I expect the public sector to do the same thing."

Not guilty plea
The man accused of a double stabbing at the Red Hill shops last month pleaded not guilty in the ACT Magistrates Court yesterday. Timothy David Allen is charged, with his friend Lindsay Vincent, of attacking Joshua McIvor and James Elliott as they sat in a car at the shops in the early hours of September 29. Police allege Allen, 26, came within millimetres of killing McIvor as he stabbed him in the chest with a large curved knife. Allen and Vincent, 24, allegedly robbed the two victims of about 3g of methamphetamine, or ice, during the incident.

GPs on their way
A recruitment campaign has lured 10 GPs to Canberra. The ACT Division of General Practice and the ACT Government jointly developed the campaign. Health Minister Katy Gallagher said yesterday the program had "reaped some early rewards". "One doctor has already started working in the ACT. Five have been offered positions with GP practices and are currently going through the registration process, and four are in the final stages of the process and expected to take up positions in the ACT in 2009," she said.

Death inquiry
Police are trying to establish the cause of death of a man whose body was found in south Canberra on Monday afternoon. A male relative of the dead man discovered his body about 2.20pm in bushland between Alibon Drive and Sulwood Drive, in Kambah. An autopsy will be done today. Investigators urge anyone who saw activity in the Mt Taylor Nature Reserve area on Monday to call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

Kevin 24/7 is in the genes, retiring official tells caucus

By Kate Hamon

Federal Labor's departing national secretary says he is sick of people complaining that Kevin Rudd works too hard and sleeps too little.

"That's what people expect from world leaders and it's called the leadership gene and he has it in spades," Tim Gartrell told the Labor caucus yesterday.

In a farewell appearance before Labor MPs who were back in Canberra for two weeks of Parliament, Mr Gartrell was thanked with warm applause and a gift of a crystal decanter after five years at the helm of the Labor Party national secretariat.

A caucus spokesman said Mr Gartrell had become only the third national Labor Party secretary to have guided the party from opposition into government since the Second World War.

He had found a select group whose other members included the late Mick Young, who steered the Whitlam government to victory in 1972, and Bob McMullen, who was party national secretary at the time of the 1983 Hawke government victory.

The caucus spokesman said Mr Gartrell



RESIGNED: Labor national secretary Tim Gartrell.

thanked caucus for its support in the wake of the 2004 election loss and the Prime Minister personally for his support in the past year and particularly during the election campaign.

"He always stepped up to the plate every time brilliantly," Mr Gartrell said.

"I'm sick of people telling me that he doesn't sleep enough and works too hard."

The spokesman said Mr Gartrell talked about the bad times and the good times and he linked Labor's success to the discipline of the caucus developed in the wake of the 2004 federal election loss.

Mr Gartrell stressed the importance that caucus maintain that discipline under the Rudd government.

He announced his resignation last month, saying he wanted to pursue interests in the private sector.

Mr Gartrell will finish at the ALP on Friday, October 24.

Gun-toting heroin dealer jailed

A Canberra heroin dealer who protected his turf with a sawn-off semi-automatic rifle was jailed for two years yesterday.

The man's partner, who was caught trying to visit him in the Symonston Remand Centre with heroin and cannabis in her mouth, escaped serving more time over her part in the drugs "business".

Patrick James Colville pleaded guilty to possessing the heroin for sale when he was arrested at a Canberra motel room in December last year.

He also had \$1260 in cash, a loaded 22-calibre semi-automatic rifle and several mobile phones. ACT Magistrate Beth Campbell said the father of three drug dealing was obviously a commercial operation.

Colville's partner, Kerry Patrick, convicted for her lesser role in the heroin operation and for possessing drugs at the Symonston remand centre in June, was released on a two-year good-behaviour bond, having spent 65 days in custody and 90 days in drug rehabilitation.

Neil Towell

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Numbering your squares helps shape Canberra's future.

To record a valid vote in the ACT Election on Saturday write numbers in the squares on the ballot paper - no ticks or crosses. Start from 1 and don't use the same number twice.

You should fill in at least as many squares as there are vacancies in your electorate - five in the electorates of Brindabella and Ginninderra and seven for Molonglo. And every number you write after that could make a difference.

Electronic voting is also available at some polling booths. If you choose to vote electronically, the program will guide you through the voting process.

Remember, handing out how-to-vote cards is banned within 100 metres of polling places, so plan how you want to vote in advance. It's worth getting it right. Because, on election day, you're helping to shape Canberra's future. For more information call Elections ACT on 6205 0033, or visit our website at www.elections.act.gov.au

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