

MEDIA RELEASE

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SUE BRADLEY AM COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR

THE LIMITATIONS OF LIMITED SELF GOVERNMENT - TERRITORY DAY 2007

“What are we celebrating on Territory Day 2007?”

“On Territory Day we celebrate the increased autonomy given to us in 1978 with Self Government. On Territory Day in 2007 we are conscious of the limitations of limited Self Government as opposed to Statehood.” Sue Bradley will say in a speech at the flag raising ceremony outside Parliament House in Darwin tomorrow morning (1 July).

“The intervention of the Commonwealth announced on Thursday 21 June 2007, clearly shows Territorians our democratically elected government is not always allowed to govern on our behalf.”

The Statehood Steering Committee Co-Chair today highlighted some reports about our current position in the Australian federal system:

John Howard on ABC Radio “PM” Program 21 June 2007: *It is interventionist; it does push aside the role of the Territory to some degree...*

Prof George Williams on ABC Radio Darwin 21 June 2007: *... it's actually pretty straight forward when it comes to a Territory. The Australian Constitution gives the Territories a lesser status to the States, it says that the Australian Parliament can pass laws on any subject whatsoever for the Territory, it can unmake Territory laws, it could even undo Territory Self Government if it wanted to. So it's intervening here using a power that it clearly has and the only limitations on it are political, it can really intervene to the extent it sees fit.*

Nicholas Rothwell The Australian 22 June 2007: *“Nothing Less than a New Social Order” This battle of ideas has now taken a decisive turn: the Prime Minister has acted unilaterally in the one place he can: the Territory, where federal law prevails.*

John Howard Sydney Morning Herald Online 26 June 2007 *“Duty of Care Justifies Government Action” : ...why just in the Northern Territory and why only now? Because we can, given our constitutional powers...As to the problems in Queensland, NSW and Western Australia, we do not have the power and authority to act in the same way. The core of the problem - law and order - is the exclusive responsibility of the states under the constitution.*

The Statehood Steering Committee is only interested in the constitutional aspects of the Commonwealth Government's policy announcements on 21 June.

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