



**Senator Catryna Bilyk
Labor Senator for Tasmania
MEDIA RELEASE**

WOMEN NOT REPRESENTED BY THE TASMANIAN LIBERALS

Tasmanian Labor Senator, Catryna Bilyk, said today that Tasmanian women had been let down by Senator David Bushby's behaviour in a Senate Estimates hearing.

"Senator Bushby's behaviour yesterday was completely unacceptable, and I think Tasmanian women have every right to feel let down," Senator Bilyk said.

"As Minister Wong said, he would not have behaved like that if she had been male."

Senator Bilyk said that the Senator's behaviour was indicative of an outdated political party not representative of the views of Tasmanians.

"The Tasmanian Branch of the Liberal Party has failed to endear itself to female membership for at least 10 years now," Senator Bilyk said.

"The Tasmanian Liberal Party is outdated, it's a boys' club, and continually discourages female leadership."

Senator Bilyk pointed out an ongoing under-representation of women to Liberal Party leadership positions in Tasmania:

- There has not been an elected female Tasmanian Liberal Party Senator since the retirement of Senator Jocelyn Newman in 2001.
- There has not been a female Tasmanian Liberal Party candidate elected to Federal Parliament since 1996.
- The Liberals preselected only one female out of eight candidates at the 2010 Federal Election.
- Only three out of 12 sitting Tasmanian Liberal Parliamentarians are women.

The last female to contest the Tasmanian Liberal Party Presidency, Jenny Branch, was so disenchanted by the Liberal Party boys' club, she resigned saying, "Just look at the group at the top table (at the state conference)—at the top of the Liberal Party structure—there is not a woman in sight."

Similarly, according to *The Mercury* on 8 November 2010, on Ms Branch's way out, she condemned the Liberal Party as locked in to "old ways of thinking", dominated by "yes men" and unable to tolerate "strong women" in top ranks.

"It's about time Senator Bushby and the Tasmanian Liberal Party grew up," Senator Bilyk said.

"The Tasmanian Liberal Party needs to open itself up and become more than just a boys' club.

"I would urge Senator Bushby and the Tasmanian Liberals to accept that Australia has moved on from the sort of behaviour we saw yesterday."

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