



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

TASMANIAN LIBERALS' TOKEN GESTURE TO WOMEN

Tasmanian Labor Senator, Catryna Bilyk, today welcomed the news that the Tasmanian Liberal Party are seeking to preselect a woman to the Senate.

"However, the fact that any female preselected will most likely end up third on the ticket adds to a growing body of evidence that the Tasmanian Liberal Party is nothing more than a boys' club," Senator Bilyk said.

Today's *Examiner* reported that the Liberals were seeking a female candidate to run on the Senate ticket at the next election, but that Liberal senators Richard Colbeck and David Bushby would be likely to fill the first two spots.

"Tasmanian women must be increasingly asking themselves whether the Liberal Party is really a party that represents their hopes and aspirations," Senator Bilyk said.

"We saw the attitude of the Liberals towards women demonstrated quite clearly by Senator Bushby's sexist behaviour during Senate estimates."

Senator Bilyk said that the Liberals' desperate search for a female candidate meant that they may have finally woken up to the fact that they are failing to present as a modern political party.

"It appears that the Liberals have been dragged kicking and screaming into the Twentieth Century. Maybe one day they'll move into the Twenty-First," Senator Bilyk said.

The under-representation of women in the Tasmanian Liberal Party:

- 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, 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."
- 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.

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