**PRESS RELEASE**

**ENOUGH IS ENOUGH: VIOLENT SPEECH HAS NO PLACE IN PUBLIC DEBATE**

Feminists and supporters across the country are calling for an end to use of language that is symptomatic of violence towards women in current political commentary.

“We accept that debate, commentary and opinion are important avenues for public discussion and information about issues that affect us all” said spokesperson Betty Green

“Violent hate speech directed at women political leaders reveals a concerning acceptance of abusive tactics in public life”

While we expect that from time to time such discussions and conversations will be passionate, dynamic and robust, we do not accept that the language used should ever express sentiments which are reflective of violence against women.

We have heard or read about comments and statements in a variety of media directed at Julia Gillard the first female Prime Minister of Australia that deeply concerns us.

Influential commentators and leaders have suggested placing her in a bag and drowning her at sea (Alan Jones June 2011, July 2011), kicking her to death (Grahame Morris Feb 2012) and having a “target on her head” (Tony Abbott March 2011), “burn the witch” placards (Carbon Tax Rally March 2011) and the persistent use of the language “liar” and “bitch”

Comments such as these may well be described as “off the cuff”, “the rough and tumble of politics” however, we find these comments disturbing and troubling.

Violence against women is not a trivial matter. In Australia 1 in 4 women will experience some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime*,* and cost the Australian economy approximately $13.6 billion per year.

On average 76 women are killed annually in Australia at the hands of their current or former partners.

“We and our supporters are saying clearly that this trend is not acceptable”

Attitudinal change has been identified as a key strategy in reducing violence against women in this country. Millions of dollars in public campaigns and initiatives work towards this end

If we as a community accept speech reflective of violence towards women as being “par for the course” in public life then we undermine each and every one of these efforts.

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