

JUST WHO IS WRECKING THE JOINT?

REGAINING A HEALTHY RESPECT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Along with a number of individual women and women's organisations, economic Security4Women is also concerned about the current attack on the democratic process that is being waged with misogynistic language and founded on a general contempt for women.

We support the points Anne Summers has made in an important speech where she listed the instances of sexist, violent rantings against the Prime Minister. There are two versions of her speech on her web-site, one 'plain vanilla', the other with the comprehensive citations- read that only if you have a strong stomach. Find both at www.annesummers.com.au.

We support the spectacular response on the Twittersverse, largely led by Jane Caro, on the [#destroyingthejoint](#) hash tag against another rant by a male commentator to the effect that 'women are wrecking the joint'.

And we endorse the position put by Mary Crooks, CEO of the Victorian Women's Trust in the Fairfax papers¹ and on-line.

"Our country has become mired in discordant voices of fury, sexism, hatred and disrespect – and many Australians are deeply uneasy. They know and understand intuitively that a destructive and violent political discourse squeezes out the possibilities of rational and civil disagreement. They recognise that strong traditions of respect, tolerance, fairness and democracy are under pressure".

eS4W supports the call to respect the Westminster principles that define and give stability to democracy. We support the legitimate minority government that is led by the first woman to occupy the country's powerful top job; and that also has worked hard to introduce ground-breaking legislation.

We question the lack of interest by large sections of the media in the legislative program of the minority government and agree that it borders on disdain for democracy at work.

eS4W calls for respect for women and girls and for the democratic process. We agree that the gendered attacks 'directed towards the Prime Minister are disrespectful – to her and women and girls generally' and to the office of Prime Minister.

eS4W agrees that we all have a key role to play in restoring respect to our politics – and we urge our member organisations to contest and change the discordant tone, quality and focus of current political debate.

Let's join other women and counter this destabilising of the minority government by challenging the idea that it has no legitimacy. It is a constitutionally-based government and deserves to be allowed to govern in its own right, for a full term.

Let's call for an end to the sexism directed towards the Prime Minister.

'A healthy democracy is founded on respect – respect for democratic principles, democratic institutions and political office; respect for the ethos of a fair go; respect for gender equality; respect for the next person; robust and respectful debate; respect for truth in reporting; respect for sound policy and legislation and, above all, respect for the common good.'

Economic Security4Women strongly endorses the statement by the Victorian Women's Trust, and urges readers and members to download or send for the complete VWT paper. Contact the Trust at women@vwt.org.au.

Sandra Cook, Chair, eS4W

Kimberly James, Executive Officer

Sally Jope, Policy Advisor

¹ <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/society-and-culture/suffering-a-sad-lack-of-respect-20120915-25z26.html>