

Tony Abbott's silence on violence towards women is deafening

By Barry Everingham

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(image by John Graham)

Tony Abbott, is very quiet about VicHealth's latest report on violence to women. Should we be surprised about a man whose misogyny record went viral globally and who can't talk to women without being creepy? Senior correspondent, Barry Everingham reports.

In Melbourne in the past few days, the Police Commissioner, Ken Lay, has been out in public getting stuck into men who are violent towards women. His message is clear to all men:

"Don't do it"

"NO does not mean YES"!

There's something sad and sick in a community when leaders need to be so frank about sexism, rape and misogyny. To underscore this, a nationwide VicHealth [survey](#) found a sizeable portion of those polled believed there are circumstances in which violence and rape could be excused.

Four in ten agreed that rape was the result of men not being able to control their sexual need. But, alarmingly, more than half agreed that women could leave a violent relationship if they really wanted to (despite the man threatening to kill them, the kids or the family pet if they did).

Many of the statistics revealed that violence against women could be eliminated if attitudes shifted but VicHealth chief, Jerril Rechter, [said](#):

'On the whole we haven't improved much since the first survey was completed (1995). But what we're seeing is more people who now understand that violence is more than a bruised eye or broken bones.'

Rechter [went on](#):

'People need empathy and education to understand how difficult for a woman in a violent relationship to leave.'

The answers came from a wide cross section with little difference in attitude between states and territories or low, middle or high income earners.

Young people between 16 and 25 generally had poorer attitudes about sexual assault while older people – 65 and older – were less likely to support gender equity and had rigid ideas about a woman's role in a relationship.

However, more than half agreed that women often fabricated cases of domestic violence to improve their prospects in family law cases.

friend, the egregious Alan Jones, barked that Julia Gillard should be put into a chaff bag and drowned at sea?

Or his amusement at the vile sexist slogans calling Gillard "Brown's Bitch" and "ditch the witch".

(image by John Graham)

In this latest survey, it is surprising that people were not asked why the country's leadership is basically silent about this scourge.

Tony Abbott is a prime example of indifference. Abbott refuses to admit that by having only one woman in his cabinet those female backbenchers who have been patronised by given assistant ministerships or totally ignored are sidelined.

Hardly a ringing endorsement of the power of women in the world of Tony.

Who will ever forget his silence when his good

And even worse, he refused to comment on Jones's statement that the then Prime Minister's father died of shame.

Verbal violence that escaped the man who even [said](#) to Gillard that:

"if she wanted to make an honest woman of herself"

As Julia Gillard said at the time:

"something he would never have said to a man".

Abbott is quick to jump to judgement on many social issues but for a man known to be short-tempered towards women he is silent on these issues.

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He really summed up his real attitude towards women with the following [gem](#) when minister for health:

"Abortion is the easy way out".

Or this [one](#) from Gillard's famous misogyny speech, quoting Abbott:

"Men have more power generally speaking than women, is that a bad thing?"

(Julia Gillard's fiery speech went viral with over 2.5m views and made headlines around the world, with commentators declaring the performance a blistering success)

Julia Gillard's speech slamming Tony Abbott for misogyny has gone viral around the world <http://t.co/JGylo7k7> v [@abcnews](#) RT [@jimrhiz](#)

— Tim Rayner (@timrayner01) [October 10, 2012](#)

If Tony Abbott is serious about a woman's role in society or even her safety in her home or on the streets he could begin by coming out and telling us what he really thinks.

The isolated, battered woman, who has been excluded from her peers and friends, might get some solace if a prime minister showed he cared.

(image by John Graham)

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