

## Media Statement - 2 May 2013

I had previously intended to let this matter lie and allow Mr Gilmore to deal with the consequences of his actions. I have always enjoyed a positive relationship with Mr Gilmore however it is extremely disappointing to see that he has now attempted to shift responsibility on to others and has apologised on behalf of his "group" rather than accepting blame for his own actions. While the group was enjoying itself, I certainly would not consider the other members to be acting in a boisterous manner nor in any other way that would bring them into disrepute.

I felt compelled to leave a private note of apology directly in relation to one incident at the conclusion of the night where Mr Gilmore attempted to use his status as a Member of Parliament to his own advantage once he had been denied further alcohol service. He threatened to have the Prime Minister's Office intervene and end the waiter's employment. His business card was presented to verify his identity. This was extremely embarrassing. Our service that night had been outstanding and I held the staff in the highest regard. After Mr Gilmore departed I was left to explain to the staff member that the powers of a backbench list MP are rather limited, do not extend to the firing of restaurant staff and that his job was safe. To causing a hard working and professional staff member to needlessly fear for his employment is totally unjustified and unbecoming a person holding public office.

By the time this incident occurred the remainder of our party had left the restaurant and were not connected to these events in anyway, I consider attributing blame to any other person to be completely unjustified. I had hoped that this would be a private matter to be resolved between Mr Gilmore and the staff member involved, however given the level of media interest and the half hearted apology of Mr Gilmore I consider it prudent to have the facts set out in full to prevent other persons being unfairly tarnished by the actions of Mr Gilmore.

Andrew Riches