

SHAMEFUL BEHAVIOUR

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS II

I am a supporter of AFL football and applaud the stance they often take on a variety of issues. Special games dedicated to historical events, racism, medical research and gender equality to name a few.

However, there is no point talking the talk unless you are prepared to walk the walk. This year in particular has been a breakthrough for women's involvement in AFL.

AFLW exceeded all expectations for public interest and support. We have many women now represented on the AFL Board or individual team Boards.

Women umpires are commonplace now and this weekend will see the first woman to fill the Field Umpire position. I wonder what her workplace will be like? Will she be treated any differently to any other Field Umpire? How umpires are treated is a whole other story in itself.

Last weekend there was a sledge made by a St Kilda player against the Captain of the Carlton FC. So incensed was he by the remark/s that he responded with his own form of inappropriate comment to a player injured on the ground, a melee ensued.

The initial sledge contained reference to Marc Murphy's wife as its focus. We do not know exactly what was said,

but we do know that it was of a sexual nature.

I will go so far as to link this type of sexist language to rape culture. I do not think the perpetrator would ever commit this crime. However, there is a definite link between the language we use that objectifies or vilifies women and rape, a most heinous crime.

What disgusts me the most is the response to the sledge. Initially it was acknowledged that the sledge 'crossed the line' but Carlton did not want to talk about it or take it any further. St. Kilda's response was also an acknowledgement that it happened and their players would be counselled in

house.

Words like 'banter' were used to describe this event. What we do know is that it was so far 'over the line' that no one has dared recount publically or put in print what was actually said. There was some discussion that linked the comment to a 'legend' of the game, Wayne 'The King' Carey.

That in itself is interesting because he has been linked directly to Domestic Violence in the past as well as sexual assault for those of us old enough to remember the Headlines of the early 1990's when he grabbed the breast of a woman walking past him and made a derogatory comment.

It took way too many commentators reporting on it (Caroline Wilson and Tim Watson) before the language coming out of the AFL Leaders became strong enough on the issue. That is not good enough. It took a long me for the AFL to listen to the Michael Longs and Nicky Winmars of the football world before they took more than a token approach to racism.

If only they were as strong on this issue as they were in supporting Adam Goodes or Eddie Betts.

Sexist language is the language of inequality. Inequality is at the heart of sexual crimes and domestic violence.

Congratulations Eleni Glouftsis for your ground-breaking achievement. I hope you find respect in your workplace and you are judged for your ability to officiate this great game alone and nothing else.

1800 RESPECT