

## Negating our views

The Human Rights Commission's report was tabled in the Senate six weeks ago. Since then, there has been no substantive discussion in parliament about the report. Tony Abbott used traditional silencing techniques – attack, shoot the messenger and then ignore the message. These techniques have been effective; they have taken the focus away from children in detention.

No doubt, like me, other women have experienced this type of silencing behaviour. Men like Mr Abbott see disagreement as combat they must win. They do not respond respectfully to alternate views. Instead, they react aggressively. They will interrupt, talk loudly and mock. They shoot the messenger rather than listen to the message. "Argumentum ad hominem" replaces reasoned arguments.

In response, Gillian Triggs has remained composed and professional. She is a role model for all women at the receiving end of such attacks in both public and domestic places. I call on all of us who are victims or witnesses of this type of bullying to similarly take a firm stand. This behaviour must be named for what it is: a technique to negate our views.

**Sarah Russell, Northcote**