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## Goward demands 'sorry' for T-shirt

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*Australian*  
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Sex Discrimination Commissioner Pru Goward has angrily demanded an apology from an Aboriginal artist who accepted Australia's top indigenous art prize wearing a T-shirt with the slogan "White girls can't hump".

Brisbane-based artist Richard Bell, 49, wore the T-shirt when he accepted the \$40,000 Telstra Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Art Prize in Darwin on Friday.

Bell said he designed the shirt himself and wore it to the awards "to make the black women feel good".

"I can't comment on people's insecurities," Bell told a Northern Territory newspaper. "It works on different levels and different people are going to take it different ways, and I wore it for all those reasons."

Bell could not be contacted for a comment yesterday.

Ms Goward said Bell's behaviour would not have been tolerated if he had been a white artist making offensive jokes about the sexual behaviour of Aboriginal women. "It's got to be understood that the law and cultural standards have to be upheld by everyone in Australia, regardless of colour and creed," she said.

Ms Goward said she could not take action against Mr Bell unless she received a complaint from someone who had been offended by the T-shirt or Bell's behaviour. But she called on indigenous leaders to pressure Bell to apologise.

Ms Goward said former Test cricketer David Hookes was widely condemned for recently calling a South African woman a "dopey, hairy-backed sheila".

"David Hookes made comments, was roundly ticked off, and the same must apply," she said.

"We're talking about a man of considerable talent. It's particularly important for leaders, black or white, to make it clear he's got to apologise, just as David Hookes recognised that he'd offended community standards."

Ms Goward dismissed Bell's argument that the T-shirt would make Aboriginal women feel good. "I don't think black women feel better about themselves when you speculate about their sexual prowess or availability."

A Telstra spokesman said the company remained committed to the awards. "We do not believe they should be jeopardised by the actions of one particular artist."