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## PM hits back at Gai Waterhouse's criticism of her fashion sense

UPDATE 2.30pm: PM hits back at remarks about her fashion sense, saying she was focused on the grief of the Japanese not her looks.

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🕒 2 min read April 27, 2011 - 12:00AM HeraldSun

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Gillard Japan outfit

UPDATE 2.30pm: PM Julia Gillard has hit back at offensive remarks by Gai Waterhouse about her fashion sense, saying she was focused on the grief of the Japanese tsunami survivors and not on her appearance when she visited the region on Saturday.

"My focus when I was standing there was on the devastation around me and for the grief of the people, the grief you could see etched on their faces," said Ms Gillard.

Ms Waterhouse, one of the most powerful women in the racing industry and known for her impeccable fashion sense, has declared Ms Gillard needs to smarten up her appearance while representing Australia on her international mission.

"When will our dear Prime Minister go to (Sydney hairdressing salon) Valonz?" Ms Waterhouse wrote on her blog after seeing a photo of Ms Gillard visiting tsunami-ravaged Japan.

"She desperately needs a make-over. It wasn't the carnage behind that gave me the horrors, but the woman standing in front of it.

"Can't our leaders be stylish? With popularity waning she needs every card up her sleeve."

But the PM hit back at Ms Waterhouse, saying fashion wasn't the focus.

"My view is that this isn't about me and it isn't about Gai," Ms Gillard said.

"I don't wasn't anything to distract from the focus we should have on the damage and devastation that I personally saw in Minami Sanirku.

"I mean those images will live with me always, the horror of the event, the grief those people felt and the recovery they will have to go through.

"These were truly moving events, and I don't want any collateral debate to distract from that."

### What do you think of Gai's comments? Tell us below

Ms Gillard made the comments before she made a private visit to Beijing's Forbidden City.

Thousands of tourists were held back from the entrance to the gates of the grand palace of the former Emperors as Ms Gillard's motorcade was whisked into the deserted courtyard for a rare private tour.

Ms Gillard and partner Tim Mathieson were given the royal treatment as they wandered through the elaborate buildings that make up the 600 year old compound and former seat of dynastical power in China.

The pair were later mobbed by Australian tourists, including a group of students from All Saints school in Perth, who were among those waiting to get in.

Later today Ms Gillard will meet with Chinese President Hu Jintao to discuss closer defence links between Australia and China, including the possibility of live firing war exercises and visits to Australia by Chinese warships later this year.

Ms Waterhouse's call for a Prime Ministerial fashion overhaul was backed by Melbourne style gurus.

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Imogen Lamport, of Bespoke Image consultants, said Ms Gillard needed expert help.

"The reality is I don't think Julia Gillard is that interested in clothes," Ms Lamport said. "Either she gets herself some help and it stops being an issue, or she does not get help and it will continue to be an issue.

"If we are distracted by your appearance, we are not listening to what you say."

Personal stylist Amber Renae said the PM's fashion choices were not flattering: "She is very outdated and needs to work with a stylist."

However, fashion commentator Melissa Hoyer said Ms Gillard's wardrobe should not be an issue: "She has got a few more important things on her mind."

Ms Waterhouse emphasised her comments were facetious and she was not downplaying the importance of Ms Gillard's trip.



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