The tough talk by Chief Minister Paul Henderson in relation to itinerant drinking in Alice Springs highlights the unworkability and ongoing failure of his Government’s alcohol restrictions.

Shadow Minister for Alcohol Policy, Matt Conlan, said threats by the Chief Minister to close bars in the town shows that the Government’s efforts to curb alcohol consumption are spiralling out of control.

The Chief Minister told media today:

“These types of animal bars were closed down in Darwin many years ago they have no place in the Northern Territory and people on licensed premises who seek to target a particular clientele only to tip them out on the street when the bottle shops are open their time is coming and I’ve asked Delia to deal with it.’

‘Despite the Chief Minister’s tough talk, he fails to show how he will stop habitual drinkers obtaining alcohol,” Mr Conlan said.

‘If the Labor Government closes down these so-called ‘animal bars’, there are other bars in the town that also serve alcohol.

‘Targeting the bar operators misses the point. They’re operating inside the law and if there are breaches, it’s the role of the Licensing Commission to enforce that law.

‘What the Labor Government is doing is transferring the problem from one place to another.

‘The suggestion that hotel owners are targeting a particular clientele and tipping them out on the street when the bottle shops open is offensive and unfair.

‘The drinkers leave the bar of their own free will to access the bottleshops – which under the Labor Government’s regulations don’t open until 2pm.

‘The Chief Minister needs to explain exactly what additional restrictions he intends to put in place in Alice Springs and across the Northern Territory to add to the failure of his existing alcohol bans.

‘The Government’s insistence that targeting the supply of alcohol will somehow stop the flow of grog across the Territory is nonsensical.

‘The Country Liberals support taking a harder line against problem drunks and improving rehabilitation services – an area the Labor Party has neglected.”

Further comment: Matt Conlan 0408 805 338