MEDIA RELEASE

Kon Vatskalis
Shadow Minister for
Asian Relations and Trade

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Mills turns his back on China

Shadow Minister for Asian Relations and Trade Kon Vatskalis says Terry Mills comments that Indonesia has been neglected due to a “honeymoon’ period with China is ridiculous and ignores the recent visit to the Northern Territory by Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

“The Northern Territory has a strong trade, cultural and administrative relationship with Indonesia that Labor had intended to enhance with education links through student exchange,” Mr Vatskalis said.

“Strengthening our relationship with Indonesia in trade, health, cultural exchanges, education and tourism should not come at the expense of our vital relationship with China.

“We have dramatically increased Chinese investment in the Territory’s critical mineral resources exploration industry through our China Investment Attraction Strategy.

“Chief Minister Terry Mills should stop insulting the major economic powerhouse of China and send Dave Tollner there immediately to try and save the good relationship between China and the Northern Territory.

“Terry Mills has quite openly never been a fan of trade with China; his focus has been instead on Taiwan, which he has visited at the expense of the Taiwanese Government.

“While the CLP has so far shown they are intent on tearing down any previous Government initiatives that worked, they should swallow their pride and continue with the Chinese Investment Attraction Strategy.”

A frequent visitor to China to promote the Territory, Mr Vatskalis said he would be happy to accompany Mr Tollner to introduce him to his contacts.

“If Terry Mills refuses to send Dave Tollner then he should at least consider sending Kezia Purick who like Dave understands the importance of strong relations with China to the future of the Territory’s resources sector,” Mr Vatskalis said.

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