Gerry Wood, Independent Member for Nelson says the Planning Minister wants to farewell Parliament tomorrow with a ‘Dave’s Special’ last minute piece of legislation which will take away part of the functions of the Development Consent Authority and give that power to the Planning Commission by changing the Planning Act.

Gerry says even though local Government and other rational people have objected to these proposed changes, Dave has ignored it all as he marches on into the sunset leaving a trail of irrationality for Territorians to remember him by.

Gerry says the DCA is the body which presently hears rezoning applications and under the present scheme at least there were local representatives on the DCA who had local knowledge. Now under ‘Dave’s Special’ legislation the Planning Commission which was not established for this role will hear the applications for rezoning instead of the DCA. This will mean no local representatives on the board and the need for only one person from the Planning Commission to hear the application which will presumably be Dave’s friend, the Planning Commissioner.

Gerry says the legislation should be dropped especially as we are only 2 months out from an election and 3 weeks from when Parliament will be prorogued. It is not urgent this Bill be passed - the present system isn’t broken.

So why does the Minister want the Planning Commission to take over the role of the DCA?

He claims that it is because of the Commission’s ‘broader strategic role and continued extensive consultation’. He conveniently forgets that the DCA also knows the broader strategic plan and has locals on it to give advice. The Planning Commission has no ability to have locals on it and as for extensive consultation, the Planning Minister has obviously been on the raspberry cordial too long if he believes that to be true.

Gerry says that the Minister claims that these changes will contribute to community confidence in strategic town planning issues. It is obvious he did not attend a recent public meeting run by the DCA last Friday week in Howard Springs, otherwise he wouldn’t have made that statement.

If this legislation is passed then it will be a slap in the face to common sense, Territorians, local Government and especially to Denis Burke the chair of the DCA. I wonder what Denis thinks?