Sue Carter  
*Shadow Minister for Health & Community Services,*  
*Senior Territorians, and Arts & Museums*

**Time to get the Government's head out of the sand over Alice Hospital**

15 June 2004

The Martin Government and the member for Braitling's 'Emperor's New Clothes' approach to the problems at Alice Springs Hospital - claiming that every thing is fine - will do nothing to help the hard working staff or the people of Alice Springs Hospital, CLP Shadow Health Minister Sue Carter said today.

“Dr Toyne and the member for Braitling have their heads in the sand over this issue. This is about the ability of hard working staff to be able to deliver the health services they want to to the people of Alice Springs. It is nothing to do with talking the Alice Springs Hospital down,” Ms Carter said.

“It is farcical for Health Minister Toyne to refuse to concede that he is having major problems recruiting anaesthetists.

“Yet Health Minister Toyne has now advised Territorians in Parliament today that the ICU at Alice Springs Hospital has been down-graded to a lower category which cannot deal with patients on ventilators and higher levels of intensive care.”

Ms Carter said more and more Health Minister Toyne reveals that he is not on top of the job.

“He further emphasised this when did not know that Alice Springs Hospital is about to face a major shortage of midwives - with 10 leaving at the end of this roster (and precious little is being done to recruit more),” Ms Carter said.

“ Alice Springs Hospital is in trouble - and anyone in a position of responsibility denying this is doing the community a great disservice.”

Ends