Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, says the Government’s decision to industrialise the centre of Darwin Harbour reflects harbour planning of the 19th century.

Gerry says that Territorians have a unique opportunity to keep Darwin Harbour different from other harbours by retaining much of its natural beauty and siting industrial development away from the harbour.

What the locals and tourists will now see under Labor’s visionless plan will be industrial sheds backing onto the mangroves that surround Darwin Harbour. That will make us look like any other harbour. Does our ex Sydney CM long for Botany Bay?

Gerry says he supports development that needs direct access to the sea but industrial development that has no requirement for access should go elsewhere, such as:

- Land between the 11 mile and the Berrimah Industrial precinct (including the Berrimah farm) and leading down to the port
- Land presently used for extractive industry on the Howard Peninsula and adjacent to the proposed regional landfill facility

All this land is suitable for industrial development and closer to the Port than Middle Arm.

Gerry says that the Government conveniently forgets 7600 people signed a petition in 2001 which said ‘that Darwin Harbour be declared a national marine conservation park with only essential development permitted’ and a petition also in 2001 signed by 6332 people which said ‘that no further development occur on Middle Arm Peninsula until a total and independent assessment of the cumulative effects of such development is completed’.

On top of this poor decision, the Government by declaring Glyde Point a conservation zone without an Environmental Impact Statement has thrown out science and replaced it with political expediency.

Darwin needs a site for heavy industry. By ruling out Glyde Point, the Government now says all industry will be in the middle of Darwin Harbour- what a joke! What a place to site Dow Chemicals or an aluminium smelter.

The Labor Government had a chance to make our harbour unique, now it will simply be a repeat.