TRANSPORT MINISTER ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

The Territory Opposition has accused the Transport Minister, Delia Lawrie, of being lazy and arrogant for waiting until the April sittings of Parliament to introduce legislation to fix up the debacle of the Transport Officers.

On the 19th of November 2006 Delia Lawrie announced the employment of 4 Transport Safety Officers “to improve safety and security on Darwin’s public bus network”.

The Transport Minister claimed the Officers would “have the statutory powers to remove troublesome passengers from buses, or prohibit them from boarding.”

On the 13th of December 2007 the Minister announced she had “instructed the Department of Justice to look at what additional powers can be given to drivers and Transport Safety Officers”.

“Having failed to give the Transport Officers the necessary powers to do their job in the first place, the Minister now can’t be bothered to ensure the legislation necessary to fix the problem is before Parliament at the first opportunity,” says Fay Miller, Opposition Transport spokesperson.

“Parliament resumes next week.

“Why do Transport Officers and the public they are supposed to protect have to wait until the middle of the year to get the powers necessary to put trouble makers off the bus?

“By the Minister’s own admission Transport Officers in Western Australia have the type of powers she has failed to give Territory Transport Officers in the first instance.

“Now Delia Lawrie says she won’t be able to deliver the necessary legislative changes until the April sittings – 16 weeks after bus drivers were forced to strike to get the Government to take the issue seriously.

“Nor will Delia Lawrie accept any responsibility for the inordinate delay in delivering the necessary legislative changes.

“Last week Paul Henderson refused to accept responsibility for the failure to deliver the Middle School campus in Palmerston on time. Territory Labor is never to blame for any failings.

“Too many people are being threatened and intimidated by trouble makers on our buses – we need properly empowered Transport Safety Officers now. Get the legislation into Parliament.”

Further comment: Fay Miller 0407 720 511