MINISTER VOWS TO PROTECT BLUE WHALES IN TERRITORY PARKS

The Minister for Parks, Len Keily, was today profoundly embarrassed when forced to admit that he had included the Blue Whale in a list of species that he was protecting in Territory Parks.

In his statement to the Territory Parliament on the 8th of May he said “There are currently 203 threatened species of plants and animals in the Northern Territory and our parks and reserves are critically important in protecting them.”

During Estimates today it was revealed that the list the Minister was referring to included animals long extinct, such as the Lesser Stick-Nest Rat, and animals not indigenous to the Territory, including the Blue Whale.

When all the species already extinct, extinct in the wild and not threatened in the Northern Territory are excluded, the list shrinks to 161 threatened plants and animals in the Northern Territory.

“What became crystal clear during questioning was that the Minister had no idea about the list of threatened species he claimed were being protected in the Territory’s parks and reserves,” says Fay Miller, Shadow Parks Minister.

“The Minister’s responses to my questions were astonishingly inept; he repeatedly referred to his staff before answering quite straightforward questions.

“There is an extremely good lesson here for the Minister, get a real understanding of the matters you are making public statements about.

“The Minister should also be demanding that the Department cleans up the numerous mistakes on its web site.

“ Including the Blue Whale in the list of threatened species in the Territory is nonsensical.
“Indeed the website notes that there isn’t enough data regarding Blue Whales to make a determination on its conservation status in Territory waters, but still lists it as threatened in the Territory.”

Further comment: Fay Miller 0407 720 511