A Health and Community Services Complaints Commission investigation into the security arrangements at Royal Darwin Hospital has again exposed a culture of cover-up and negligence in Health going all the way to the top.

“The Health Minister and the Health Department CEO, Dr David Ashbridge, presided over a dismal response to improving security measures at RDH following the appalling sexual assault of a 5 month old infant,” says Matt Conlan, Shadow Minister for Health.

“Following their earlier collective failure regarding the death of Margaret Winter both men should do the honourable thing and tender their resignations for the myriad failures the Commissioner exposes.

“The fiasco of not taking even the most basic steps to improve security at RDH following the sexual assault of the infant is staggering and disturbing in equal measure.

“The years of inaction and evasion outlined in the Commissioner’s report makes grim reading and leaves both men in an untenable position.”

“The Commissioner described the failure to implement a 2002 report on security at RDH before the sexual assault in 2006 as shameful.

“Following the appalling assault the Commissioner found action taken by RDH - slow, inadequate and poorly evaluated.

“The Commissioner also found that information on the implementation of security measures was repeatedly withheld.

“The expert security consultant who delivered the 2002 report was re-engaged in 2007 but not told of the sexual assault.

Nor was Royal Darwin Management Board with the Commissioner concluding that:

This can only mean the rape of a five month old child was not considered important enough ... to report to the Management Board.

“And the Australian Council of Health Standards was also kept in the dark about the relevant information.

“The fish rots from the head and under Burns and Ashbridge the Health Department is stinking to high heaven.”

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