YEARS OF COVER-UP EXPOSED

The Territory Opposition is demanding an independent judicial investigation into all matters relating to the wide scale and long running breach of planning laws in the Territory.

“We now know why the Attorney General interfered in a court case and then mislead Parliament on this issue – it was to cover-up years of the Territory Government breaking its own planning laws,” says John Elferink, Manager of Opposition Business.

“There’s two distinct but equally important issues here that need independent investigation.

“Firstly, we have the attempt by the Attorney General to cover-up years of the Territory Government breaking its own laws.

“To that end the Attorney General interfered in a prosecution that was before the courts and then misled Parliament about directing the CEO of Planning to withdraw the case.

“Both of these actions warrant a full independent investigation.

“The former Premier of South Australia, John Olsen, was forced to stand down as Premier after being found guilty of misleading Parliament about a simple contractual matter.

“The former New South Wales Labor Attorney General Bob Debus left no doubt about the danger of politicians interfering in prosecutions.

Political considerations should have no place in the decision to mount a criminal prosecution – the day that politics takes precedence in criminal prosecutions is the day the justice system loses its integrity and the courts lose respect as independent tribunals of fact.

“I note that to date the only document the Attorney General has released on this matter was a letter from my colleague, the Member for Katherine.

“The fact the Attorney General continues to withhold all other documents is just further proof of the need for a judicial investigation.
“The other equally serious aspect is that doubt that now exists regarding the structural integrity of buildings across the Territory.

“The safety of buildings across the Territory is now in doubt because of years of Territory Government inaction on this matter.

“This raises the possibility that people have been placed in danger as a result of systemic Government failure.

“It also appears that the Territory Government has occupied buildings that breach its own planning laws.

“Three senior Labor Ministers – Delia Lawrie, Chris Burns and Kon Vatskalis - have all held the Planning portfolio whilst building after building has been occupied without adequate inspection.

“This is scandal and only an independent judicial investigation is going to get to the bottom of this murky pond of incompetence, evasion and dishonesty.”

Further comment: John Elferink 0418 406 400