GOVERNMENT STAYS SILENT ON SMOKE BAN

Northern Territory pub and club owners are growing increasingly frustrated at the Henderson Government’s failure to consult over planned new smoking bans.

Shadow Licensing Minister Peter Styles said the Government had been virtually silent since announcing last July it would ban smoking indoors at licensed premises.

Mr Styles said with the bans due to take effect from January 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2010, time was running out for pub and club operators to modify their premises to meet the guidelines planned by the Government.

“Owners and operators don’t know the details of what Government is planning,” Mr Styles said.

“During Estimates Committee hearings the Government refused to answer questions on the changes, and in the weeks since Estimates have continually failed to respond to industry concerns.”

The Government’s inaction goes beyond rude. It’s arrogant.

Two weeks ago Clubs NT wrote to the Chief Minister outlining their concerns.

The letter calls on the Government to:
… urgently provide us with guidelines and regulations that allow Clubs to plan and implement structure changes.

In his total arrogance, the Chief Minister’s response was to give the letter to an adviser whose response was that Clubs NT would be contacted in the near future.

“This Australian Hotels Association has also made representations to Government seeking details of its plan for a smoking ban,” Mr Styles said.

“It’s unclear why the Henderson Government and Licensing Minister Kon Vatskalis are ignoring the pleas of this crucial sector of the Northern Territory economy.

“It’s either an example of Labor being too preoccupied with its own internal dramas to provide proper governance or another case of the Henderson Government making an announcement without being prepared to do the follow-up work to make it happen.”

Further comment: Peter Styles 0411 640 660