TENDER TIMES THIS CHRISTMAS

The Henderson Government has chosen a curious time to begin the tender process for a new aero-medical service in the Top End.

Member for Katherine, Willem Westra van Holthe, said beginning the process three days out from Christmas appears quite bizarre, given Labor’s been banging on about its plans for months.

What’s more, it has opened tenders when it’s own Government website says tenders and quotations are suspended during the Christmas-New Year period.

“The Health Minister, Kon Vatskalis, should explain exactly why the Government has chosen to open this process now,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“Why is it beginning the process outside the timelines indicated on the Government website for the closing and advertising of tenders and quotations over the holiday period?

“At first blush, it appears a case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing.”

Mr Westra van Holthe said he welcomed the back-down by the Government on plans to stop operating an aero-med service out of Katherine.

“About three months ago I had a briefing with Health Department bosses, including CEO David Ashbridge, during which I was told aero-med services would only operate out of Darwin and Nhulunbuy.

“On the strength of that the Katherine community organised a petition which was tabled in the Alice Springs sittings of Parliament with almost 2000 signatures.

“I’m happy the Government has backed down and listened to the Katherine community on this issue.

“All that remains now for the Katherine service to operate at full capacity – rather than during daylight hours as is currently the case – is for the Department of Defence to get on top of the wallaby problem at Tindal Air Base.”

Further comment: Willem Westra van Holthe 0414 778 430