Peter Styles MLA
Date 11th March 2010

Paul Henderson should reveal whether the proposed use of the Northern Immigration Detention Centre was discussed during his 25-minute meeting with the Prime Minister yesterday.

Shadow Minister for Multi-Cultural Affairs, Peter Styles, said there are increasing signs asylum seekers from Christmas Island will be transferred to the Darwin detention centre in the short term.

"The Chief Minister should tell Territorians what he knows about the Commonwealth’s plans," Mr Styles said.

"In recent days, advertisements have been placed in the Northern Territory News seeking staff to work at the facility as well as a report that Fire and Rescue personnel have been told to familiarise themselves with the lay-out of the centre.

"I understand there are already in excess of 50 people smugglers at the Darwin centre, many of whom are under 18 years of age.

"If Darwin is about to receive an overflow of Christmas Island detainees, the community should be briefed on this and the Chief Minister and other Territory Labor ministers should outline what they know about the Federal Government’s plans.”

Mr Styles said the Rudd Government’s asylum seeker policies are failing, and no amount of spin by the Prime Minister and Chief Minister can hide the fact that change is needed.

"Labor’s soft asylum seeker policies put people’s lives at risk, because they fail to discourage these desperate people from making the risky crossing into Australian waters.

"Labor’s policies fail the Territory’s vast multi-cultural community, which has arrived in Australia through legitimate means and are frustrated to see asylum seekers arriving through the back door.”

Further comment: Peter Styles 0411 640 660