MEDIA RELEASE

AERO-MED TENDER PROCESS IN TATTERS

Matt Conlan MLA

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The tender process to secure a new aero-medical operator and the Government’s credibility are in tatters as a result of the latest revelations surrounding the botched tender process.

Shadow Health Minister, Matt Conlan, said the 11th hour decision to modify the aero-medical contract is a blow to operators, who have participated in the tender process in good faith, and to thousands of Territorians in regional and remote communities.

It also highlights the Government’s dishonesty, given that just weeks ago the tender process was described as ‘on track’.

“The tender process is in disarray and the Government’s credibility in this matter has hit rock-bottom,” Mr Conlan said.

“More than a year into the tender process and the Government has introduced a series of significant changes into the contract mix – and then claims the process is ‘on track’.

“This explains why the Government delayed a final decision by six months, but doesn’t explain why the Health Minister, Kon Vatskalis misled Territorians on this serious failure.

“By failing to announce the changes to the tender process, Mr Vatskalis showed he is prepared to do anything to save face.

“Representatives from companies that took part in the tender process are understandably frustrated and angry the goal-posts have been changed this late in the game.

“If the Government had wanted the new aero-medical operator to provide its own medical staff, it should have been outlined in the original contract.

“Similarly, the Government must explain why it is now offering alternatives to aero-med bases at Darwin, Katherine and Gove.

“Health Minister, Kon Vatskalis, has been talking about changes to the aero-med service for the best part of two years – yetTerritorians in remote communities are no closer to having the stability of service they require.

“The advice by Government’s so called aviation expert has been dismantled in Parliament and dismissed by the broader aviation industry, yet the minister is quite comfortable to let the process continue down its shambolic path.

“Kon Vatskalis must step in and steady the process which, under its current form is clearly out of control.

“This is not what the taxpayers of the Territory should have to endure, particularly when it comes to a matter as serious as medical evacuations.”

Further comment: Matt Conlan 0408 805 338