The Child Protection Minister must interrupt his visit to China to respond to serious questions regarding his Government’s handling of harassment claims against a Territory public servant.

Shadow Child Protection Minister, Robyn Lambley, said the Henderson Government’s pursuit of former hospital social worker Susan Mansfield raises serious questions about its priorities and focus.

“It is atrocious that this Government is prepared to take action against a dedicated social worker who put into writing concerns about the well-being of Northern Territory children,” Ms Lambley said.

“Why isn’t the Government investigating exactly who in the Department was accountable for the tragic circumstances around the death of Palmerston school-girl Deborah Melville?

“Deborah was in Government care and died in the backyard of the home of her carer, yet nobody from Government was brought to account.

“Why is the Government not investigating why Susan Mansfield’s warnings about the inappropriate placement of a baby with a family member were ignored?

“Who is being held accountable for the mismanagement of this case and the subsequent permanent brain damage by this child in the two week period he was in the care of a family member?

“Susan Mansfield’s concerns about this baby were vindicated, yet the Government employed a private investigator to probe her conduct on a technicality, instead of its own significant and tragic failings.

“Ms Mansfield is being persecuted by the Henderson Government for putting the welfare of children at risk ahead of self interest.

“Kon Vatskalis should break his silence and explain why his Government’s priorities are so flawed and call off the witch-hunt against Susan Mansfield.”

Further comment: Robyn Lambley 0428 040 693