COUNTRY LIBERALS

MEDIA RELEASE
SECOND RATE TREATMENT
Willem Westra van Holthe MLA
Date 20th December 2010

The Government’s failure to finalise the aero-med contract by its own timeframes again highlights Labor’s incompetence and incapacity.

Member for Katherine, Willem Westra van Holthe, said the Government’s assertion the tender process is ‘on track’, even though a decision won’t be made until at least 18 months after tenders were sought, highlights Labor’s appalling decision making processes.

‘It’s simply not acceptable that this process has been so protracted and given such a low priority,’ Mr Westra van Holthe said.

‘There are very real concerns about the operation of the aero-medical service and the Government is doing nothing to assure people in the Territory’s regions that their health requirements are being taken seriously.

‘I regularly hear reports of long delays in patient retrieval and night flights into Katherine are still banned because of the wallaby risk at Tindal.

‘It’s high time Health Minister Kon Vatskalis showed leadership and stipulated that Katherine again become a 24/7 aero-med base to service the vast areas outside the immediate Darwin area.

‘Stakeholders are hoping finalisation of the aero-medical contract will add some certainty and continuity to the service.

‘It’s telling the Government left it to a bureaucrat to announce the tender process has turned into another debacle.

‘The Minister is all talk. In September 2009 he said in a media release that the safety of patients ‘being transported on aero-medical planes is his uppermost priority’.

‘As a result he said he had asked his Department to ‘bring the date of the tender forward to next month’.

‘Typically of Minister Vatskalis, he’s there with the good news, but goes missing when the news is bad.”

Further comment: Willem Westra van Holthe 0414 778 430