Planning Minister, Gerry McCarthy, has refused to commit to a completion time for the long-awaited upgrade of Flagstaff Park in Larrakeyah.

“In the process, Gerry McCarthy made a dill of himself,” says Member for Port Darwin, John Elferink.

“Like so many Henderson Government projects, Flagstaff Park is way overdue.

“What makes this worse is that it was announced on the eve of the 2008 Territory election in a desperate – and ultimately unsuccessful – bid to retain the Port Darwin electorate.

“When she announced the transformation plan in July 2008, the Planning Minister Delia Lawrie said:

‘Tenders to develop Flagstaff Park will be called in coming weeks, with the construction contract to be awarded at the end of the year and work to begin soon after.’

‘Two-and-a-half years later, there’s not been a skerrick of action at Flagstaff Park – except for the unedifying sight of Minister McCarthy scurrying for cover.

‘In Parliament yesterday, the Minister ducked and weaved when asked why the $6million allocated for the project in the 2007-08 budget hasn’t been spent.

‘Instead of answering, he offered up platitudes like:

‘This is a very important piece of work from the government we will be delivering. We will be delivering, and I accept the chronology. I would also like to say to the House this is a very important piece of work and, therefore, important to get it right.’

And:

‘Member for Port Darwin, it is definitely a piece of work from Government that we are …’

‘And this wasn’t the only time the Minister tried to dodge a question today. The other screened on Channel Nine News last night when he was asked why it had taken Labor so long to fulfil its promise to install CCTV in taxis.

‘His response:

‘Growth of the industry in the Northern Territory is productive and positive and it’s reflecting the Northern Territory as a growth area in Australia.’

‘The Minister is treating the community with contempt.”

Further comment: John Elferink 0418 406 400