**MEDIA RELEASE**

**SNAIL-PACE RESPONSE TO BACTERIA ALERTS**

Peter Chandler MLA

Date 12th April 2011

Environment Minister Karl Hampton must explain why it’s taken Government almost a year to try and find the source of unacceptably high levels of bacteria in Darwin Harbour.

“It’s been 10 months since e-coli and enterococci levels were found to be too high in the Harbour, and only now has Government initiated a tender process to identify the source,” Mr Chandler said.

“According to the Government website, Charles Darwin University has been awarded a consultancy to find the ‘sources and hotspots’ for beach bacteria.

“Because the University was chosen as a select tender rather than through public tender, details surrounding the cost of the tender are unavailable.

“But the Minister needs to explain his indifference to the state of the Harbour.

“Week after week unacceptably high levels of bacteria were identified in Darwin Harbour, and the Minister failed to act.

“Monitoring results haven’t been posted on the Government website since before Christmas.

“I hope the scope of this investigation includes a probe into the drains that flow into Darwin Harbour, including the drain near Chapman Road in Rapid Creek, and the impact that PowerWater’s effluent outfalls have on the harbour.

“For an Environment Minister, Karl Hampton is remarkably complacent about the Harbour’s welfare.

“This is reflected by the time it has taken to lay charges over the spillage of copper concentrate at East Arm Wharf.

“Almost 12 months after a serious spill was reported, the Government has finally responded to community pressure and a prosecution has been initiated.”

Further comment: Peter Chandler 0429 076 493