MEDIA RELEASE

PORT IN A STORM

February 16th, 2012

Shadow Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Adam Giles has called on the Henderson Government to come clean on the progress of Darwin Port upgrades.

“Until last year’s rail derailment, mining company Oz Minerals had been freighting copper concentrate from South Australia to East Arm Port by rail,” Mr Giles said.

“The rail cars were not hard covered but had exceptional environmental approval to operate because Darwin Port hadn’t been appropriately upgraded to take the newly designed carriages.

“While the rail line remains closed – despite the Labor Government saying it would be ready by the end of January – Oz Minerals has moved their export process to South Australia and will continue to use those port facilities with their newly designed carriages.

“Questioned in parliament today Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Gerry McCarthy, refused to say when East Arm Port will be upgraded to receive Oz Minerals’ new rail carriages and he refused to say how much money the Darwin Port is losing each week as a result of Oz Minerals not using the Darwin Port.

“As well as Oz Minerals, Bootu Creek-based OM (Manganese) has also been forced to stock-pile while the railway line is repaired.

“The Darwin Port Corporation continues to find it difficult to turn a profit and the ongoing failure to upgrade the port to accept the new rail carriages highlights Labor’s lack of economic focus.

“Minister McCarthy must detail when the port will be upgraded to take the new carriages, if and when Oz Minerals will return and what the loss of income so far has been.”

Further comment: Adam Giles 0421 588 118