October 31st, 2012

The Country Liberals Government is determined to change the culture that has infiltrated a section of the Northern Territory Public Service’s procurement function.

Attorney General John Elferink said the Commissioner of Public Interest Disclosures annual report identifies instances of corruption within the public service which has the potential to erode confidence with the Territory's procurement process.

"The undermining of the Territory's procurement process could have far-reaching implications for Territory business and how the Territory is perceived interstate," Mr Elferink said.

"Commissioner Allan Borg identifies procurement as an essential function across the whole of Government and identifies 'a clan mentality' within certain small workgroups where improper conduct 'is tolerated and supported'.

"In one investigation the Office of the Commissioner for Information and Public Interest Disclosures points to the activities of a public officer who released confidential information including pricing and specifications in relation to a potential tenderer and that the public officer had accepted gifts and hospitality from competing firms over a number of years.

"A separate investigation also revealed that two public officials sought and accepted gifts of electrical items valued at approximately $1000 from a period contract holder.

"In both instances the employers are no longer with the Northern Territory Public Service and police are investigating.

"I want to make it very clear that this type of criminal act will not be tolerated under the Mills Government and any public official who crosses the line will be dealt with in accordance with the law.

"The Country Liberals will not let the corrupt behaviour tarnish the good name of our public servants, nor will the Government stand by while illegal activities take place.

"The Government will implement the recommendations for change within the NTPS in respect to the gifts and benefits policy and enhance general training of staff relating to conflicts of interest."

Media Contact:
Camden Smith 0488 588 754