Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, says the decision by the Government to approve a Mataranka water licence, to a CLP candidate standing in the next Federal election, opens up many questions that need be answered by the Government.

- Why was the application by MacFarlanes (applicants for the water licence) rejected by the previous Department of Water Resources?
- Why was that decision upheld by the Supreme Court?
- Why was the decision also supported by the independent Water Advisory Review Panel?
- Why did the Government sack Ian Lancaster who was the water controller involved in the licensing discussions? Did that have sacking have anything to do with the poor relationship between MacFarlanes and Mr Lancaster as highlighted at a Senate Select Committee in 2009?
- Did the Mataranka Water Advisory Committee support the decision?
- Is the Minister’s decision at odds with the draft Mataranka Water Management Plan?
- When did the MacFarlanes apply for a water licence under the new scheme?
- Was there a requirement to identify what crops were to be grown especially crops that would need 5000g/l, before the licence was granted?
- What would happen if the MacFarlanes subdivide their land- can the water allocation be sold with each parcel of subdivided land?
- Have other existing growers and users in the Mataranka region received their water licences and what was their allocation?
- How does this fit in with the National Water Initiative that the NT has signed up to? This intergovernmental agreement set out to achieve a nationally compatible market, regulatory and planning based system—one that manages surface and groundwater resources for rural and urban use, and optimises economic, social and environmental outcomes.
- Is it true that growers were told by the CE of the Department that the licence was given because the Government just wanted to get the water licences done and the Government didn’t want to impede development?
- Is the Mataranka Water Advisory Committee still operating or has the Government plans to scrap it?

Gerry says that unless the Government comes up with some believable answers to these questions and details the science behinds its decision there will little choice but to regard this decision as political nepotism.