BLACKOUT INQUIRY MUST BE PUBLIC

Shadow Minister for Essential Services, Nicole Manison, today called on the CLP Government to ensure that there is an independent and public inquiry into yesterday’s unprecedented blackout in the Top End.

“Never before have we seen a blackout of this magnitude,” Ms Manison said.

“PowerWater is an essential service for everyone and without it the Territory is brought to a halt, as we saw yesterday.

“Territorians want and have a right to know what happened with their essential service that caused such a widespread outage.

“We know the CLP Government often tries to avoid scrutiny and transparency. They still refuse to release four secret reports into open speed limits and often controversial announcements are deferred until late on a Friday afternoon.

“The CLP Government needs to ensure that any inquiry into yesterday’s blackout is open to the public so that the 130,000 Territorians who were left in the dark get the answers they deserve.”

Ms Manison said that the CLP Government needs to abandon their plans to split PowerWater Corporation and instead focus on ensuring reliability of service through repairs and maintenance.

“Labor planned to spend in $87m in 2012/13 on repairs and maintenance at PowerWater. On coming to power the CLP cut it by almost 10% to $80m and is budgeting even less - $78m - this financial year,” Ms Manison said.

Ms Manison said that the Chief Minister, Adam Giles’ claims that allowing competition into the market would have helped yesterday was incorrect.

“Yesterday’s events appear to be a fault in the network,” Ms Manison said.

“Power Networks are required to deliver electricity to consumers and includes infrastructure such as poles, wires and substations.

“Any competitor introduced to the market would be delivering electricity to their consumers using the same network which failed yesterday.”

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