TOLLNER SLAMS CLP PIPELINE DEAL

Treasurer Dave Tollner has today made an extraordinary attack on former CLP Treasurers Ian Tuxworth, Marshall Perron and Barry Coulter, the Leader of the Opposition Delia Lawrie said.

Ms Lawrie said that Treasurer Tollner’s attack on the Amadeus Gas Pipeline deal was a foolish political stunt that exposes how desperate he has become to blame Labor for anything.

“I am advised that the Amadeus Gas Pipeline deal was negotiated in the mid-1980s by former CLP Treasurer Ian Tuxworth and signed off in 1986 by former CLP Treasurer Marshall Perron,” Ms Lawrie said.

“Further, advice is that the deal was renegotiated in the late 1990s under former CLP Treasurer Barry Coulter. Labor inherited the deal.”

Ms Lawrie said that at the time of the late 1990s deal renegotiation by Mr Coulter, financial modelling of the deal occurred by merchant bankers Fay Richwhite which we believe showed the pipeline deal provided savings to the Northern Territory in the vicinity of $120 million.

“Treasurer Tollner should reveal all government documentation around the pipeline deal if he wants to make ridiculous assertions,” Ms Lawrie said.

“I understand successive CLP governments through the 1980s and 1990s supported this gas pipeline deal because it delivered a crucial piece of infrastructure to supply gas to the Channel Island power station saving the Northern Territory money over conventional financing methods.

“Perhaps Treasurer Tollner needs to listen to Barry Coulter.

“Further I am advised that Mr Perron as Treasurer signed a letter to NT Gas – a subsidiary of pipeline owner APA – that the Government would not bid against NT Gas when the lease ended.

‘As Treasurer I understood the logic that government’s aren’t in the business of gas pipelines and recognised there was no logical reason to bid against APA which would
have simply driven up the sale price earning more revenue than banks when APA could have its subsidiary NT Gas purchase the pipeline."

Ms Lawrie questions why Mr Tollner is not recognising that APA is a major ASX-listed gas transportation business with interests in energy infrastructure across mainland Australia.

Ms Lawrie pointed out that APA has assets that include 14,000kms of natural gas pipelines, gas storage facilities and a wind farm.

“It is a ludicrous suggestion that government should spend about $60m to enter the energy infrastructure business. That funding is better spent on schools, hospitals and police stations,” Ms Lawrie said.

“Finally Mr Tollner blames me for decisions made by PowerWater in relation to a lease which includes provisions of maintenance. This is a lease between PowerWater and APA.”

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