CLP HIDING FROM LICENCING SCRUTINY

Shadow Attorney General, Michael Gunner, today said that Territorians should be concerned that the removal of the Northern Territory Licencing Commission Act proposed by the CLP Government will result in a lack of transparency in the licencing application process.

“The CLP have form as the most secretive and untrustworthy Government in Territory history and the decision to remove public transparency for the licensing commission is sadly another example of this pattern of behaviour,” Mr Gunner said.

“Removing public hearings about new licences will remove scrutiny from important government decisions around pubs and clubs, racing and gaming and more.

“This is another move by the CLP Government to make decisions about the Territory without the proper consultation with Territorians.

“It will become even harder for the public to voice their opinions on new licenced premises opening in their communities.

“This proposed change will also create an environment for the CLP Government to make licencing decisions without needing to provide supporting evidence.

“As Dr John Boffa said on ABC radio today, when the road safety council was removed it became easier for the CLP to re-introduce open speed limits with no evidence that it is a benefit to the community.

Mr Gunner said that this proposed legislation is a continuation of the CLP Government’s flawed alcohol policies - that have resulted in increases in alcohol related violence and increases to alcohol related presentations to Royal Darwin Hospital – and will allow the CLP Government to control who could supply alcohol without any consideration to the effects of the surrounding community.

“Dealing with alcohol is one of the biggest issues the Territory faces and we should not be taking the backwards step of abolishing the independent licensing commission and public hearings,” Mr Gunner said.

“The independent Licensing Commission brought experience and expertise to making decisions – the Commission guaranteed transparency and gave the public confidence decisions were being made independent of political donations.
Mr Gunner said legislation allowing decisions to be made behind closed doors is a bad result for Territorians.

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