WHY HAS THE PLANNING MINISTER TAKEN OVER?

Gerry Wood, Independent Member for Nelson, wants to know why the Minister’s has interfered in a rural subdivision application.

He says that the Litchfield Development Consent Authority has twice rejected an application to subdivide a block of land on Stow Road, Howard Springs, into two one hectare blocks.

The block of land has an area of 2ha which is the minimum lot size for the zone RL (rural living).

Gerry says that a third application has just been heard and unbeknown to the public this was not an ordinary hearing; the Minister had decided to become the Consent Authority himself taking the decision out of the hands of the independent DCA.

The DCA heard the application last Friday and it will now report to the Minister. The Minister will then make a decision.

The advertisement in the paper for this subdivision made no mention of this DCA hearing being done on behalf of the Minister.

Gerry says the Minister needs to make a clear statement as to what is so special about subdividing a block into two that he has now directed the Authority to hear the application for a third time on his behalf?

The Minister needs to say whether this block of land is owned by a prominent member of the CLP.

Gerry says for the sake of openness and transparency the Minister needs to say who wrote to or contacted the Minister asking for him to decide this subdivision application or if he decided on his own, why and what prompted him to do so?

Gerry says if the Government can set up an inquiry because they believe the Labor Party was doing favours for the union movement then a ‘Stella Maris’ inquiry should also be held into this matter.

Gerry says if the Minister overrides the DCA’s original decision and allows this block to be subdivided because it is ‘special’ then this will set up a precedent which will lead to
everybody wanting ‘special’ status for their block of land and therefore ‘special’ approval from the Minister. And that will be a planning disaster.

If the Minister goes ahead with approving this subdivision then a Stella Maris inquiry is even more definitely needed.

P.S. A one hectare block of land in Howard Springs is worth between $400,000 and $500,000.

Below are the relevant details from the DCA meeting’s agenda last Friday:

PUBLIC HEARING ON BEHALF OF THE MINISTER
NORTHERN TERRITORY PLANNING SCHEME

AGENDA ITEM: 1  MEETING DATE: 13/06/14  FILE: PA2014/0322
APPLICATION: Subdivision to create two lots
APPLICANT: Earl James and Associates
LAND OWNER: Margaret Evelyn Shewring
Robert Vivian Shewring
LOCATION: Section 3869 (145) Stow Road, Hundred of Bagot (Bookmark A)
ZONE: Zone RL (Rural Living)
AREA: 2.01ha

On 21 May, pursuant to Section 85 (3) of the Planning Act, the Minister for Lands Planning and the Environment directed that the Minister would be the consent authority in relation to the application and requested that the Litchfield Development Consent Authority conduct a public hearing on his behalf.

8. RECOMMENDATION
As per your delegation under Section 50 (3) of the Planning Act you conduct a public hearing on behalf of the Minister and receive information from person or authorities which made submissions in accordance with Section 49 (1), (2), (3) of the Planning Act to the subdivision of Section 3869 (145) Stow Road, Hundred of Bagot.