Media Release

Peter Chandler, Member for Brennan
Minister for Lands, Planning and the Environment

Unions fail to learn lesson from Stella Inquiry

26 June 2014

The Country Liberals Government has moved quickly to implement the first recommendation of the Inquiry into the dodgy Stella Maris deal by asking Unions NT to relinquish any interest they claim in the prime CBD site.

Recommendation one of the Inquiry into Stella Maris reads:

_I recommend that the Northern Territory Government (the government), as a result of this report, immediately request Unions NT to relinquish any interest it may claim in the proposed Crown lease of Lot 5260 Town of Darwin (1 McMinn St), commonly known as the Stella Maris site (the site) and invite Unions NT to join a future expression of interest process._

The Department of Lands, Planning and the Environment has responded to this immediate recommendation by writing to Unions NT requesting that they return Stella Maris back to the Territory Government. (Letter attached)

Minister for Lands, Planning and the Environment Peter Chandler said it’s sad a formal letter was needed for Unions NT to recognise this deal was dodgy and not in the public interest.

“In the words of Commissioner John Lawler the Stella Maris deal was not ‘accountable, responsible or in the public interest’,” Mr Chandler said.

“Commissioner Lawler also said then Minister, now Opposition Leader, Delia Lawrie ‘acted with bias over many years, forming a view in 2009 that Unions NT should be exclusively granted a lease over the site without an expression of interest process’.

“It is clear the Union’s claim to the site is illegitimate and robs the community of a valuable asset.

“I call on Unions NT Secretary and former Labor advisor, who was involved in the Stella Maris deal, Alan Paton to listen to the recommendations in the enquiry and relinquish any interest his organisation claims.
“The Country Liberals Government wants to do what Labor should have done instead of helping out their union mates and put the site out for expressions of interest, but first Unions NT need to find the integrity their Labor mates were lacking.

“Stella Maris needs to benefit the community not just union coffers. The only way that can happen is through an open transparent and accountable process, not the unaccountable and irresponsible process that Delia Lawrie advocated for.”

The Chief Minister has requested his department to put forward an options paper for the remaining recommendations.

Media Contact: Jarrad Schwark 0437 914 736 or 8928 6617

Related files

Letter to Unions NT Re: Stella Maris  (pdf 81.2 kb)