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BUS DRIVERS NEED ALL SAFETY MEASURES IN PLACE NOW

Shadow Minister for Transport, Ken Vowles, today called on the CLP Government to fast-track the implementation of all of the outstanding safety recommendations from the Review of Safety and Security on the Darwinbus Network Interchanges that were announced last September.

“The CLP have dragged their heels on the issue of public transport safety,” Mr Vowles said.

“It has been a year since a serious incident on a female driver triggered a safety audit and since bus drivers are facing increased attacks.

“The CLP Government has not prioritised implementing the recommending safety improvements.

Mr Vowles said many of the serious offences against drivers and passengers can be linked to alcohol, with public drunkenness and alcohol related violence being out of control in Darwin and Palmerston.

“The latest crime statistics show that under the CLP assaults in Darwin are at their highest number in the history of data collection,” Mr Vowles said.

“1896 assaults occurred last year, an increase of 20 per cent since the CLP Government came to power. This staggering amount of violence is affecting every aspect of our community, including public Transport.

“Seventy per cent of incidents on our bus system occur away from public interchanges and drivers rightly want more safety officers and more preventative actions to stop drunks and problem passengers getting on buses.

“One of the safety audit recommendations was to establish a working group of Police, Larrakia Nation Patrols and stakeholders to address anti-social behaviour – this needs to be urgently implemented and consideration given to extra patrols to stop drunks getting on buses.

“The CLP Government needs to release an implementation report outlining what measures have been put in place to date and what is still outstanding.
“Territory Bus drivers and passengers deserve a stronger focus on their safety not just knee jerk reactions after incidents.

“The CLP Government needs to stop ignoring the evidence on the streets and in the crime stats that public drunkenness is out of control and unfortunately our public transport system is bearing the brunt.”

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