LEASE THE DARWIN PORT, MR GILES, WITHOUT A MANDATE FROM THE PEOPLE AND YOU WILL MEET THE SAME FATE AS THE LNP

Gerry Wood, Independent Member for Nelson, says the Government should not be selling or leasing our Darwin Port until there has been a public inquiry into the proposal after which the possible leasing of one of our few remaining Government assets should then be put to the people at the next election.

He says the Chief Minister should abandon any plans to rush his legislation through Parliament in February especially in light of the demolition of the LNP in yesterday’s Queensland election where the leasing of Government assets was a key difference between the political parties.

Gerry says there has definitely not been enough discussion and serious analysis of the Government’s proposal to privatise our port. In light of that Gerry says he will be heading off tomorrow to visit the Port of Adelaide and the Port of Portland to talk to exporters, stevedoring companies and the owners of these privatised ports to hear what they have to say.

Gerry says the Port of Portland is very similar to Darwin in size and the mixed ranges of commodities that are exported from that port. The Port of Portland is also part owned by Palisade a company which is vying to take over the Port of Darwin.

He says the Government should tread very carefully in light of the LNP defeat. It has not explained in any detail what the benefits would be to privatise the Port except that there would be money to spend on other things.

Gerry says users of the Port may have to pay increased user charges because the leasing monopoly company will have to recover the money it paid for the lease. This has not been mentioned at all by the Government – just one reason why this privatisation move needs a thorough inquiry before it is taken to the people.

Otherwise the CLP might meet a similar fate to that of the LNP.