IMMEDIATE ACTION NEEDED ON ICE EPIDEMIC

Leader of the Opposition, Delia Lawrie, has called on the CLP Government to respond to growing community concern over the epidemic of methamphetamine “Ice” abuse in the Territory.

Ms Lawrie has asked for the immediate establishment an “Ice Room” at Royal Darwin Hospital which has construction underway now to expand the Emergency Department.

Ms Lawrie has also called for an interagency taskforce of Police, Health and the Department of Children and Families to recommend urgent actions to tackle this scourge.

“Territory families and frontline workers are dealing with a growing Ice epidemic that is affecting and harming Territorians,” Ms Lawrie said.

“Ice related property crime is also on the rise with Territory Police confirming that Ice users are motivated to steal to support their drug habits. (NT News 8 January 2015)

“Immediate focussed action is needed to combat this growing crisis.”

Ms Lawrie questioned Adam Giles in Parliament Question Time today about whether he would immediately implement measures to tackle the scourge of Ice in the Territory.

“The first step that needs immediate action is improving facilities for medical staff to manage patients on Ice who present to their Emergency Departments,” Ms Lawrie said.

“Nurses and doctors on the frontline need support and appropriate facilities to treat patients that present to them while under the influence of Ice. This facility is critical for the safety of hospital staff and patients.”

Ms Lawrie said that the Chief Minister was failing to understand the need for a multi-faceted approach that included Police, Health and support services for families.

“A multi-agency taskforce consider education and awareness, training for frontline professionals and support services. Who do families turn to and what support can they receive for early recognition and intervention?” Ms Lawrie asked.

“Our Police and nurses are doing a great job in tough circumstances. Let’s give them the tools and support they deserve. Let’s help families who are suffering the consequences of this scourge.”

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