17 October 2014

CLP CULTURE OF COVER UP

Leader of the Opposition Delia Lawrie today condemned the CLP for its culture of corruption following leaked emails which suggest criminality known at the highest levels of the CLP.

Ms Lawrie said the leaked emails between Foundation 51 Director Graeme Lewis and then Chief Minister Terry Mills in late 2012 show that at least $200,000 was funnelled into the CLP election campaign via the party’s slush fund and never declared as required under law.

“The latest media reports on Foundation 51 donations to the CLP show a breach of the provisions of the Northern Territory Electoral Act which requires the declaration of a gift of $1500 or more to, or for the benefit of, a registered party,” Ms Lawrie said.

NT Electoral Act Section 194 sub-section (7) If a person makes a gift to any person or entity with the intention of benefiting a registered party, the person is taken for this section to have made the gift to the party.

NT Electoral Act Section 215 makes it an offence punishable by imprisonment of up to 12 months for a person not to properly declare donations in returns to the Electoral Commission.

Last night the ABC reported that it had obtained an email written by Foundation 51 director Graeme Lewis and sent to the then Chief Minister Terry Mills and five other members of the CLP executive team eight weeks after the CLP took Government in 2012.

“Once again, the contributors were clearly aware, and did generally stipulate that the funds raised would be devoted to NT elections in 2012 or thereafter,” Mr Lewis wrote on 26 November 2012.

“I will be mortified if this information becomes widely known. It must be closely held for obvious reasons.” (Graeme Lewis)

Earlier leaked emails (ABC 10 October) from Mr Lewis about the purpose of Foundation 51 and who controls it to then CLP President Braedon Earley show:

“I am the sole director and shareholder, with Terry Mills for obvious reasons, not
appearing on registers, but adopting a directorial role throughout,” Mr Lewis wrote.

“As you very well know, it was set up for, and supported by numbers of business people and has necessarily had to operate absolutely separately from the Party in order to keep its activities away from public scrutiny.”

Ms Lawrie said these emails show a direct link between Foundation 51 and the CLP and that it had supported CLP election campaigns.

“These latest leaked emails expose a culture of corruption and a culture of criminality which appears to have been known and tolerated at the highest levels of the CLP. If that is how they run their party, is it also how they run Government?” Ms Lawrie asked.

“It is disgraceful that Chief Minister Adam Giles has been consistently denying a direct link between Foundation 51 and the CLP when it is inconceivable that he did not know of the link. It is already public knowledge that Foundation 51 Director Graeme Lewis sent a draft Foundation 51 press release to Mr Giles on (11 May 2014) for his comment.

“Is Adam Giles trying to distance himself from something which he knows is illegal?

“Adam Giles has ignored calls to immediately stand down Terry Mills from his $750,000 taxpayer-funded ‘ambassador’ post in Jakarta. He has already torn up the new standards of behaviour announced when accepting the resignation of the disgraced David Tollner.”

Ms Lawrie said Adam Giles has to date failed in his duty to act on a motion of Parliament passed in the August Sittings, when the Government was missing in action, to hold an inquiry into the Foundation 51 donations scandal.

“Is Adam Giles dragging his heels on the political donations inquiry until after tomorrow’s Casuarina by-election so he can use the upcoming fortnight of Sittings and the Government’s numbers in the Parliament to amend the Terms of Reference to dodge the Foundation 51 inquiry?” Ms Lawrie asked.

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