Media Release
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Trouble brews in Territory Labor

Dissatisfaction with the Gunner Government’s promised lack of consultation has spread to its Parliamentary members.

“Stuart MLA Scott McConnell’s extraordinary interview with the Alice Springs News shows the Government has not lived up to its promise to consult with Territorians,” says Opposition Leader Gary Higgins.

“This is an entirely different Government to the one Michael Gunner said he would deliver during the election campaign.”

Mr McConnell’s key criticisms include:

- Minimal back-bencher involvement in decision-making
- The ‘Fifth-floor’ failing to communicate with Caucus
- Failure to focus on regions
- Too many ‘Assistant Ministries’

“The few big decisions the Gunner Government has made have been cloaked in secrecy and have been dumped on Territorians without transparency of consultation,” Mr Higgins said.

“The part-public holidays plan was hatched in a secret deal with the unions, the Dan Murphy’s ban was sneaked into the Government Gazette, the Alice Springs police station closure was announced by the media and the broken promise to deliver a PET scanner with cyclotron was revealed by Senator Scullion.

“The Labor hierarchy must not punish the Member for Stuart for publicly expressing his anger at the Government because he is just reflecting growing community concerns at this Government.

“As the local member it is good that Scott McConnell has spoken out and maybe we will now see more back-bencher involvement in Parliamentary and community debates, where they appear to have been gagged by the Government.”


Key quotes from the Member for Stuart:
“As far as I know the ministers’ chiefs of staff have a daily meeting and the media advisers have more than one meeting a day. As a member of the Government that currently holds power, elected by the people of Stuart, I get a meeting up there, m mh, every now and again.”

“… (the fifth floor is) where things are going on. I am not in that circle.”

“The system has been designed to make it as difficult as possible for people like me” – for backbenchers.

“The more of a free thinker you are, the more that you come from a different world view and experience, like mine, being brought up with Aboriginal people in the electorate of Stuart, that just clashes with the system that exists.”

“We can’t have the policy agenda driven by people who are not necessarily engaged in what’s going on here on the ground.”

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