The Martin Labor Government must sort out the split in its ranks over whether or not Mark Latham's call to disband ATSIC, (ATSIS) should be supported. CLP Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs John Elferink said today.

"On the one hand the Chief Minister won't commit to supporting her Labor Leader's call and on the other hand the Chief Minister's Deputy Syd Stirling does support the scrapping of ATSIC (ATSIS)," Mr Elferink.

"And on the sideline the Minister Assisting the Chief Minister on Indigenous Affairs John Ahkit is so uncertain about what to say he has refused to comment. As an Indigenous Territorian Mr Ahkit's silence is a weak example of leadership.

"Mr Latham's comments have certainly put the Chief Minister in a dither. Her meaningless waffle when asked today whether or not she supported Mr Latham was embarrassing."

Mr Elferink said his position is clear.

"I think ATSIC is failing Aboriginal people and should go," Mr Elferink said.

"But it should not be replaced by something that is simply shuffling the chairs on the Titanic and that I is what I fear Australia would get from Labor Leader Mark Latham."

"From a Territory perspective the outcomes ATSIC has delivered for Indigenous Territorians have been awful no matter who was captaining the ship."

Mr Elferink said the single most important issue in the Territory is the damage that current welfare approaches are inflicting on Aboriginal people.

"Any administrative changes will not make a difference to outcomes if a Federal Government, no matter what the flavor, does not have the courage to address the welfare issue," Mr Elferink said.

"The structure Latham is suggesting will do nothing to address the problems on Aboriginal communities that are currently undermined by the poverty of helplessness that we see laid out in the streets of the Territory every day."

There needs to be systems in place that create jobs and those systems should not be undermined by a welfare system that supports sit down money."
Ends