Defence Support Minister Paul Henderson said the Territory Government and local businesses will need to scrutinise the detail of a Federal Government backflip on a national defence contract moratorium reported in the media today.

Mr Henderson said media reports today suggest the Territory Government’s proposal for a two-year moratorium for the Top End from the DIDS contract had been accepted.

“The Commonwealth Government has made an absolute mess of their new Defence Integrated Distribution System (DIDS) contract from the start and have put the 240 Territory businesses who currently meet Defence supply needs through the wringer,” Mr Henderson said.

“It’s been an absolute debacle and the Commonwealth had cut these businesses loose by failing to give a clear indication of what the DIDS would mean for their operations.

“In August I called for two-year moratorium for to allow time to put in place appropriate sub-contracting measures for these Territory small and medium enterprises, a proposal that was welcomed by many the businesses affected.

“But the CLP Member for Solomon Dave Tollner bagged the idea in a local radio interview on 18 August, saying “I cannot understand for the life of me where Mr Henderson’s getting his advice from in this regard”.

“Now we have to look at the details of what is being proposed by the Federal Government and make sure Territory businesses have not and will not be shafted again.”