Terry Mills  
Leader of the Opposition

**PowerWater in Chaos - Opposition calls for inquiry**

19 April 2004

The Opposition has today called on the Labor Government to instigate a full and independent inquiry into the ongoing problems at PowerWater.

The continuing problems within the organisation came to a head on the weekend when the entire power grid in Alice Springs shut down for around four hours, leaving essential services to rely on back-up generators and landing a body blow on the Alice Springs economy.

‘The Opposition is calling for this review and it is the obligation of the Martin Government to act now on the behalf of Territorians,’ Mr Mills said today.

‘From the public debacle over the new PowerWater logo to the tragic safety shortcomings, low staff morale, the Treasurers public deception over power price increases, and this weekends total shutdown of power in Alice Springs – PowerWater is in chaos.’

‘There must be an independent inquiry into the ongoing problems at PowerWater.’

‘I have outlined five key Terms of Reference for the inquiry and I would be pleased to offer any assistance to such a review.’

‘Key stakeholders that must have their say in an inquiry are the Chamber of Commerce, the Electrical Union, consumer groups, the business sector and the general public. The Chief Minister must nominate a review team and get on with it.

‘The Union knows that there is a problem, the business community knows there is a problem, the Opposition knows there is a problem and the public knows there is a problem at PowerWater.’

‘The only people who don't are the Labor Government.’

**TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR POWERWATER INQUIRY**

As part of the independent inquiry into recurrent management and service delivery shortcomings at PowerWater, it is incumbent on the Labor Government to address the following Terms of Reference –
• Conduct a full investigation into the citywide power outage that occurred in Alice Springs on 17 April 2004, and makes recommendations as to improvements that will mitigate against future occurrences in Alice Springs and the wider power customers in the Northern Territory.

• Conduct a full audit of staffing levels, training, morale, crisis counselling procedures, and policies in relation to employment at PowerWater, including a full and open review into the performance of Chief Executive Officer Kim Wood.

• Conduct a full audit of Occupational Health and Safety Policies, Training and Procedures and make recommendations to ensure that the future safety of PowerWater employees is not further jeopardised.

• Determine –

  • The impact of the recent $45 million PowerWater profit and subsequent $20 million government dividend on the Corporations performance, including; ongoing maintenance, training, equipment and employee safety and whether any of these aspects were jeopardised as a result, and;

  • If such a case is demonstrated, did the Labor Government have any forward knowledge of these problems when requiring its dividend?

  • Conduct an investigation into the propriety of comments made by the Treasurer in relation to the 40% increase in power costs for business and the relationship with National Competition Policy, and whether the community and Parliament were mislead.

Ends