Jodeen Carney
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Sniffing announcement: Cynical opportunism and Minister Scrymgour at odds with Toyne

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Shadow Attorney-General, Jodeen Carney, says that the Government's petrol sniffing announcement on Friday was a cynical attempt to pre-empt the findings of a Parliamentary Committee, and a desperate act to make ‘an' announcement before Tuesday when the CLP's Bill giving Police powers to seize inhalants and make sniffing illegal is due to be debated in Parliament.

“On Friday Marion Scrymgour made a quick dash to Alice Springs for the announcement. She failed to answer questions put to her on ABC radio about the ‘rumblings' within youth and other organisations who had only heard about the trip that day or late the day before”, Ms. Carney said.

After 3 years, the Parliamentary Substance Abuse Committee is due to table its long-awaited report these sittings leading many to believe that the Government's announcement was politically driven.

Ms. Carney described it as “shameful” for the Minister to make the announcement without waiting to see the final report. “It's nothing more than political opportunism”, she said.

The final embarrassment for Government in this saga is that in April, Health Minister Peter Toyne said that a ban on sniffing would be “counter-productive”. He categorically ruled out banning petrol sniffing. Yet, on Friday Marion Scrymgour announced that sniffing would be banned.

“Labor has been all over the place on this issue. First one of their members said in Parliament that sniffing should be illegal. Then, the Health Minister rules out a ban. Then the back-up Health Minister announces that it will be banned, but not made illegal, and no one in Government seems to know what a ban is anyway!

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