The Minister for Environment and Heritage, Dr Chris Burns, has rejected the suggestion that the Northern Territory Government has a secret list of contaminated sites.

"Today’s NT News wrongly attributed comments to me regarding a list of contaminated sites," said Dr Burns.

"At no stage did the journalist speak with me, and I am advised that my office did not provide the comments attributed to me. Most importantly, there is no "secret" list of contaminated sites in the NT."

A 1997 ANZAC Fellowship Report on Contaminated Site Remediation in Australia identified that there were potentially 1000 contaminated sites in the Northern Territory. This included:

- between 100-300 service stations
- between 200-300 cattle tick dip sites
- between 100-200 mining sites
- about 90 military sites

"It is irresponsible to suggest that contamination is confirmed at these generalised site categories – the report merely identified certain types of sites that could be contaminated."

"Currently in the Northern Territory, where there is a likelihood of contamination at a specific site, an environmental investigation needs to be conducted before any development can take place on the site, and depending on the level of contamination, a remediation or cleanup order may be issued.

"However, Government recognises that with increasing development, it is necessary for an improved process to be developed. So earlier this year, I released a draft proposal for a new framework to deal with site contamination which is designed to provide greater certainty to landowners and developers; consistency of approach by regulators; and transparency of process to the general community.

"Public comment has now been received on the proposal, and is currently being considered by the Office of Environment and Heritage, and I look forward to receiving recommendations for the implementation of an Environment Protection (Site Contamination) Objective.

"In the meantime, any suggestion that there is a "secret" list of
contaminated sites in the Northern Territory is just plain wrong."