Terry Mills
Leader of the Opposition

Govt hiding truth about hundreds of thousands of dollars going to Labor mates

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The Chief Minister and her Labor Government have acted improperly and lied to Territorians about the results of a report investigating the arrangement between its Health CEO Robert Griew and a consulting company with strong Labor Party links, CLP Leader Terry Mills said today.

Mr Mills told Parliament the Chief Minister and her Government was also guilty of failing to respond to clear excesses by the CEO of Health by issuing contracts without following normal procurement guidelines to Metis Consulting, headed by a personal friend and colleague of Mr Griew.

Moving a censure motion in Parliament, Mr Mills said the Government's impropriety had extended to it covering for the Health CEO in a way which is clearly meant to prevent further investigation and scrutiny of the contracts awarded to Metis Consultancy.

“Why else has Government only tabled today one page of a 17 page report. What was in the other 16 pages contained in the report,” Mr Mills said. “The Government has conspired to hide the full details from Territorians through Justice Minister Toyne. Metis is a company run by a former Labor staffer that has been richly rewarded by the Territory Labor Government with hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of contracts.

“The Chief Minister and her Government have allowed the procurement process to be undermined by its Health CEO Robert Griew so as to cause a loss of faith by Territorians in the integrity of the procurement process.

“The Martin Labor Government has undermined the faith of Territorians by issuing Certificates of Exemption to a company with strong Labor Party links. There are a number of facts of concern about how Government awarded the contracts:

• The fact that Metis Consulting has such strong Labor Party links.

• The fact it was given rich contracts through the use of Certificate of Exemptions ensuring no other company, Territory or otherwise, could compete for the contracts.
• The personal relationship that exists between Metis partner Chris Gration and Health CEO Robert Griew.

• The attempt to cover up the full extent of that personal relationship.

• The conflict of interest that personal relationship presents when recommending the awarding of a contract by the Martin Labor Government.

• The fact that it is a requirement that any conflict of interest due to personal relationships must be declared and that requirement was ignored.

“Everything about this has a bad smell. From the dodgy way Government has tried to justify its awarding of contracts to the way the CEO of Health has behaved in explaining the Metis contract and the personal relationship he has with Director Chris Gration.

“The fact the Government can't see that the position of its Health CEO Robert Griew has become untenable over the awarding of Government contracts to one of his mates raises more questions.

“Territorians need to be able to assure themselves that the proper processes have been followed in the awarding of these contracts rather than the Government attempting to sweep it under the carpet.

“The Martin Government claims it is quite comfortable with Mr Griew's mate being awarded contracts without anyone else being able to compete for the contracts.

“The Government also wants Territorians to accept that here is nothing dodgy in the fact that this mate is a former federal Labor ministerial staff member.

“If there was no conflict of interest why was the true nature of Mr Griew's friendship with the former Labor staffer denied in the first place.

“Mr Griew undertook a witch hunt against Territory public servants over the issue of perceived conflict of interests in the awarding of contracts.

“In this case Mr Griew has recommended Metis be awarded contracts while at the same time not declaring his friendship with a company director.

“And when confronted with it he played it down, only for it to be revealed the following day that the truth was he had known the former Labor adviser for 10 years. In fact so close was the personal friendship the former Labor staffer was a guest at Mr Griew's wedding.

“No fair minded person could be blamed for wondering about a conflict of interest.

“The harder the Government tries to sweep this under the carpet the worse the smell gets.”

Ends