23rd May 2005

Clare Martin Must Act Now – Anderson Must Go

Northern Territory Labor Chief Minister Clare Martin must act immediately while in Alice Springs and stand aside the Labor candidate for MacDonnell.

Further, the Chief Minister must order an investigation into the inappropriate use of Territory taxpayer’s dollars by Papunya town council.

These funds – totalling some $94,000 – have gone unaccounted for.

On Saturday the Chief Minister said she didn’t believe there was a need for a special investigation.

She said any inquiries of the scandal “I think you’d have to refer any details there to the Minister involved.”

That Minister is Jack Ah Kit.

Mr Ah Kit was responsible for doling out taxpayers’ money to Papunya while Alison Anderson was the ATSIC Commissioner for the Region and while her husband was the CEO.

Asking Jack Ah Kit to investigate his own culpability in this scandal is ludicrous and only highlights the need for an independent inquiry.

The Chief Minister cannot wash her hands of responsibility. Unless she acts to stand her candidate aside and order an independent inquiry then she will make a mockery of her own so called standards of honesty and transparency.

These funds are the responsibility of John Ah Kit. Mr Ah Kit has repeatedly refused to identify just how much Territory money has been spent at Papunya when questioned by local media.

This is not the first time the Labor government has been implicated in a cover-up over the use of public money. John Ah Kit is still under a cloud of suspicion over his role in gifting a $35,000 four wheel drive to his mates. Other inappropriate uses of Special Purpose Grants have also been flagged by the Ombudsman.
Further, by his refusal to apologise to Warren Anderson over the failed prosecution of Owston Nominees, Mr Ah Kit will cost the taxpayer at least $1 million in legal fees. That will be Mr Ah Kit’s legacy to Territorians.

Labor is already undermining the validity of the Federal investigation by questioning its validity because they know it has the potential to implicate their candidate.

The information regarding financial irregularities came from the respected firm Deloitte’s and the Special Report in the Sunday Age was independent of any political interference and the journalist is on the record as saying so. It cannot be ignored or swept under the carpet.

Clare Martin and Labor must stand aside their candidate for MacDonnell and conduct an immediate and independent inquiry into the unaccounted for funds doled out by the government.