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Chief Minister Continues to Place at Risk Huge Navy Spending in Darwin

The Labor Chief Minister continues to place at risk the continuation of Navy vessels stopping in Darwin for rest and recreation leave, valued at up to $1 million, because of her refusal to budge on key Department of Defence security concerns, Country Liberal Party Leader Denis Burke said today.

“The Chief Minister obviously doesn’t quite understand the concerns of the Defence Department and her intransigence may cost the Territory a huge amount of money,” Mr Burke said.

“There are two scenarios. Firstly, if the Chief Minister is advocating for Navy vessels to berth at East Arm Port, then Darwin business and the community as a whole will miss out on up to $1 million spent on average by each ship. The core reason for Navy ships to stop here is the fact that the wharf is so central to the CBD. The Defence Minister has also stated that East Arm Port would be too small to handle Navy ships.

“Secondly, if the Chief Minister believes that Navy vessels can continue to berth at Iron Ore wharf, then the fuel will have to be trucked by fuel tankers around from the new fuel tanks currently being built. This would pose a very serious security risk as there would be up to 1,400 people living close by in residential units, fuel tankers would be driving through a major urban development with walkways, parks and play equipment,

Similarly, there Defence would have serious concerns about stopping in Darwin if there were people in units looking outside their window straight at and into key Navy vessels and equipment.

“I don’t believe, all security issues aside, that the people who want the Waterfront project to go ahead would give the green light to a large number of fuel tanker trucks driving through these areas where people might be playing with their kids, pick-nicking or just relaxing.”