Terry Mills  
Leader of the Opposition

**Govt refuses to answer questions over rezoning proposal**

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The Martin Labor Government has refused to answer questions raised in Parliament today over a proposal to rezone a group of residential blocks that if approved will cost landowners millions of dollars.

Shadow Planning Minister Peter Maley said the current Planning Minister Chris Burns made a fool of himself in Parliament as he floundered around unable to answer straightforward planning questions demonstrating either he was not across his portfolio or he was deliberately keeping from Territorians his knowledge of the role the previous Planning Minister Kon Vatskalis played in the rezoning proposal.

"Either the current Planning Minister Chris Burns is incompetent or he was shielding the former Planning Minister Kon Vatskalis from having to answer questions about his role in the application to rezone eight blocks of land at Tiwi from R3 to R2," Mr Maley said.

Mr Maley said Minister Burns’ refusal to accept that an unsigned rezoning application tabled by the Opposition today was not valid was breath-takingly arrogant.

"Territorians have a right to have important questions answered about the former Planning Minister Kon Vatskalis’ role in the rezoning application in an honest and intelligent manner," Mr Maley said.

"Territorians have a right to know if any of the proper processes have been abandoned by any Government Minister. If this is just a straightforward issue, as Minister Burns claimed today, why has he seen it necessary to seek legal advice over the rezoning issue.

"The Government's refusal to answer questions today raises the question of what it is trying to hide. This is not about the right of Territorians to make a rezoning application. It is about whether or not there has been a manipulation of the processes for political gain and getting an honest straightforward answer.

"Certainly the current Planning Minister was on the back foot trying to dodge questions but at the same time demonstrating his total ignorance of planning and in particular this rezoning issue.

"There were plenty of questions Planning Minister Chris Burns should have been able to give answers to and couldn’t.

"Alarmingly he seemed to have no understanding of the legalities of the Planning Act."

Ends