Chief Minister, Clare Martin, today expressed disappointment about the Federal Government’s failure to notify the Territory Government about its surprise declaration of a migration exclusion zone at Melville Island.

Ms Martin this morning spoke with Immigration Minister, Amanda Vanstone, telling her that the Territory Government should have been told about the decision rather than hear about it through the media.

"The first we heard of this was through the media and to not call the authorities in the Territory really is extraordinary behaviour by the Federal Government," she said.

"The Federal Government talks about wanting a cooperative approach with State and Territory Governments, however this has clearly not happened on this occasion.

"Despite the fact that this exclusion zone effects the Territory, we have been kept out of the loop formally, and I think this is totally inappropriate."

The Chief Minister said that if an exclusion zone could be declared for Melville then it could occur on the Cox Peninsula or even Darwin in the future.

"This is an absurd policy," she said.

"The issue of people who arrive here in boats illegally is a serious one for Australia to deal with, but simply saying we’l make an exclusion zone and not call that area part of Australia, as occurred at Melville, makes you wonder how far that could progress.

"Darwin is just very close, could we be declared an exclusion zone in the future?

"The Federal Government decided to create an exclusion zone and held an Executive Council meeting to put through the regulation without even a call to the Territory.

"Despite the fact we don’t agree with the policy, I think that we could have been informed and should have been informed - this is not what you’d expect from a Federal Government."