4th April 2005

Burke Guarantees Parliamentary Inquiry Into Ah Kit Actions

The Country Liberal Party Leader Denis Burke today guaranteed that an elected CLP government would hold a Parliamentary Inquiry into the suspect action of Minister Jack Ah Kit over the ‘gifting’ of a $35,000 four wheel drive to members of the public. Mr Burke also continues to call for the Labor Chief Minister to establish this Inquiry before the next Territory election.

Mr Burke said that instead of the Chief Minister throwing accusations around, the proper process to uncover any illegal or unethical behaviour would be to establish a Parliamentary Inquiry on the proviso that it guaranteed a report would be completed before the next Territory election.

“The Ombudsman Report into this matter, which incidentally the Labor government tried to bury, is limited in its scope and reach. It makes several very serious allegations of possible illegal conduct by Ah Kit’s own Department of Community Development and the local council that need to be investigated. The Chief Minister has publicly backed Jack Ah Kit but many issues remain unresolved and information I am receiving from the community indicates there is more to this than initially thought.

“Instead of running around calling me a liar, let’s establish a Parliamentary Inquiry to get to the bottom of this. What has the Chief Minister and the Minister got to hide? The Labor government was elected on a platform of being open, accountable and honest and I want to test whether they either put up or shut up.

“I pretty much suspect that the Chief Minister will refuse to do this which will result in the stench of maladministration and illegal activity to continue to hang over the Labor government. Therefore, I can guarantee to Territorians that an elected country Liberal Party government would hold this Inquiry to get to the bottom of the matter.

“Minister Ah Kit’s behaviour is also in direct contravention of the Chief Minister’s own Members Code of Conduct. A Code of Conduct that was a 2001 election promise that Labor have long supported. The principles that Jack Ah Kit have breached include conflicts of interest, honesty, accountability, responsibility and the public interest test.

“A Parliamentary Inquiry would be the ideal forum to get all the information out in the open and to refuse to do so obviously means that the Labor government, the Chief Minister and Jack Ah Kit have something serious to hide from Territorians.”