Terry Mills  
Leader of the Opposition

Burns nurse collapses

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CLP Leader Terry Mills has called on the Martin Government to stop spending like a drunken millionaire on gratuitous self promotion and instead find the funds to prevent the Territory's only burns nurse from packing up and leaving the Territory.

Mr Mills said Government penny-pinching on real issues at the Royal Darwin Hospital has lead to the collapse of the only burns nurse RDH has – Mrs Alison Mustapha OAM.

"Territorians will share my alarm that while the Government is inventing all manner of reasons to spend taxpayer's money on wasteful self promotion we are perilously close to losing our only burn's nurse because the Martin Government refuses to fund a second burns nurse position," Mr Mills said.

Mrs Mustapha is an internationally and nationally recognized expert in her field and despite an unremitting workload has been refused support by Government for the employment of a second burns nurse.

"The result is that Mrs Mustapha has now collapsed with work related ill health and Royal Darwin Hospital is without a specialist burns nurse," Mr Mills said.

"The Government's treatment of Mrs Mustapha is symptomatic of the problems plaguing our hospitals.

"Given the Government has no problem finding millions to spend on gratuitous self promotion you have to really question the spending priorities of this Government."

Mr Mills said the Australian Nurses Federation have made it clear that: "Mrs Mustapha herself is, health wise, in no position to return to the work place until such time as she is supported through the employment of an experienced second burns nurse."

The federation has also pointed out that: "..what ought to be viewed with the greatest alarm is Mrs Mustapha's current sentiment, namely she could not return to RDH if that position is not advertised. It is worth noting if RDH loses the
invaluable experience of Mrs Mustapha they also lose the invaluable experience of her husband Peter, who is a qualified psychiatric nurse of many years experience currently working in Cowdy and the Joan Ridley Unit."

Mr Mills said he agrees with Australian Nursing Federation's assessment that the requirement for a second burns nurse is now critical.

"I call on the Chief Minister Clare Martin to do like wise."

Ends