Ham fisted attempt to shift blame threatens Malaysian passenger service

Denis Burke
Shadow Leader of Opposition Business, Shadow Minister for Business & Industry, Police, Fire & Emergency Services, Defence Support, Asian Relations & Trade, Corporate & Information Services, and Communications

2 December 2004

The Martin Government's ham-fisted attempt to foist the blame on Malaysian Airlines for Government incompetence over the failed mango air freight trials jeopardises delicately placed negotiations for the airline to resume passenger services to Darwin, CLP Shadow Minister for Business Denis Burke warned today.

"This Government is forever looking to blame someone else for its stuff ups and now in its rush to again shift the blame for its own sloppiness it is lurching toward another dangerous bungle," Mr Burke said.

"The Martin Government has turned this whole exercise into an embarrassing fiasco with the Territory mango industry and Malaysian airlines losing patience with its incompetence.

"The Martin Government rushed into this, more interested in getting in front of media cameras than actually working the fine detail of the trial through properly

"It was a good idea that failed because the Martin Government failed to demonstrate the proper business acumen to make it work. Everyone supports trying to open up new trade routes to Asia and the efforts of Malaysian Airlines are to be commended. Sadly the Martin Government rewarded Territory mango growers that were prepared to back the trial by failing to deliver the promised goods – literally.

"It is inexcusable for Asian Relations Minister Paul Henderson to try and shift the blame on Malaysian Airlines for cancelling the trial when in fact had he been on top of the job this would never have gone wrong.

"Going to war with Malaysian airlines is more stupidity- particularly when Malaysian airlines are now in deep negotiations over a passenger service to Darwin."

Ends