CLP Leader Terry Mills has accused the Chief Minister Clare Martin of negligence by snubbing an important meeting of State, Territory and Federal Tourism Ministers at which States were vying for a stake in $600 million in federal funding for the tourism industry.

Mr Mills said the Chief Minister’s failure to attend the Perth meeting of Tourism Ministers had allowed competitors, Queensland, NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia to steal the march on the Territory in the pursuit of funding critical to our industry’s recovery.

“This is the most important meeting of Federal, State and Territory Tourism Ministers since the Federal Government announced its $235 million Tourism White Paper and the Chief Minister could not be bothered attending,” Mr Mills said.

“Clare Martin is the fourth Tourism Minister the Territory has had in just over two years and she let the Territory tourism industry down by not attending the weekend’s important Tourism Ministers’ meeting – it would also have been the Chief Minister’s first as the Territory’s new Tourism Minister.

“Hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding for co-operative tourism initiatives was on the discussion table and it beggars belief our Tourism Minister was not there,” Mr Mills said.

“Now is the time when the States and the Federal Government need to be talking about new initiatives that are going to drag our tourism industry out of the pit it has been in.

“The question has to be asked whether the Chief Minister is fair dinkum about Territory tourism and whether she is going to be just another part time Territory Tourism Minister.

“The Territory needs a Tourism Minister with their thinking cap on, who has a non-stop approach to driving tourists into the Northern Territory. The Federal Government has $600 million in funding to share with the States and Territories over the next four years and our Tourism Minister should have been in Perth with her running shoes on chasing federal funds.

“Tourism employs 16 000 people in the Territory, the Chief Minister has committed around $27 million of Territory funds over the next four years to the industry, the federal Government has $600 million to share. Now is not the time for the Chief Minister to waste important opportunities.”

Ends.