The Shadow Treasurer today referred the funding arrangements surrounding the development of the Waterfront to the Auditor General for examination. In recent times the Auditor General in NSW has criticised Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements as deficient in governance and accountability measures.

“The Waterfront Development is a project central to the economic development of the Northern Territory; that is unquestioned.” Mr Mills said,

“What remains a mystery however is the nature of the deal government has signed on behalf of Territorians to secure the development. The project is still being altered and construction has already begun. Even the scale model has been taken off public display while it is being changed.

“PPP arrangements are a relatively modern concept and used across Australia by governments to provide public facilities.

“Professor Graeme A Hodge, Director, Faculty of Law, Monash University in his Symposium Paper: ‘The Risky Business of Public-Private Partnerships’ identifies that the Australian experience has not been wholly positive.

“Professor Hodge says that ‘Governments have tended to view that the use of PPPs as a purchasing device with the objective of quick delivery, have risked due process and adequate public consideration in doing so’

“The NSW City-Link Tollway debacle has exposed the underlying risks inherent in PPPs. So bad was the experience in NSW that the Premier Mr Iemma has vowed never to deprive himself of control of a project ever again. (Four Corners 20/2/6)

“To protect citizens the NSW Auditor General has called for legislative force to require a summary of all deals made by government with the private sector to be tabled in parliament.

“In light of emerging national concerns and the Labor Government’s commitment to open and honest administration the of the NT I’ve called upon Chief Minister again to provide more details of the nature of the deal. Once again this call has been rejected.