27th of February 2006

CLP pressures Chief Minister fix her divided cabinet.

"Clare Martin has no choice but to now sack the new Environment Minister after she refused to follow cabinet directions", Opposition Leader Jodeen Carney said today.

"What we are seeing by the government's stage managed leaks to Nigel Adlam at the NT News, the Chief Minister is desperately trying to find a way to publicly justify the Mining Minister who is set to roll the Environment Minister and go ahead with the McArthur River Mine.

"Cabinet has been divided and at an impasse for weeks over this issue and now it is publicly divided. The solution over the weekend was to shoot the messenger by leaking the news that the leading scientist behind the recommendation had not visited the site recently.

"The mine going ahead will be welcome news, but the Environment Minister should have got it right in the first place. There is no way that the Environment Minister can be allowed to get away with this.

"It is a cop out for the government to now look to point the finger at a particular individual who was part of the assessment. Every process that is as important as this should have checks and rechecks throughout the whole process.

"After receiving the EPA report the Marion Scrymgour had discussions in cabinet and she will have been told not to back the EPA decision. She subsequently acted unilaterally and made the announcement anyhow.

"An immediate response is required by the Chief Minister. She must sack her Minister for the Environment or the Minister for the Environment must have the courage to resign.

"Cabinet is divided and that spells disaster in the NT.

"If this is how the Environment Minister is going to conduct herself then miners and mineral exploration companies have a right to be nervous.

"The buck ultimately stops with Clare Martin, and she must take action if the industry is going to have any confidence in her government in future."

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“How can the public be expected to take this Environment Minister seriously?

“Add to this the fact that she is about to be rolled by her cabinet colleagues, thus sending a clear Minister that neither cabinet nor the Chief Minister has any faith in her decision.

“This Environment Minister has put the lively hoods of hundreds and hundreds of people at risk, and $369 million of revenue for the territory at stake because she’s not a team player

“It then begs the question if this Chief Minister doesn't take action, how can she be taken seriously?

“Clare Martin must take immediate action.”