Where have all the Ministers Gone?*

The Territory Ministry has disappeared. In recent times the Territory Government has faced several difficult issues and the whole of the Ministry has disappeared and government now appears to be being run by remote control and by Public Servants.

Here are some examples:

**McArthur River Mine**, Clare has yet to utter a word as the usual habit of quarantining her from any bad news by the spin factory is observed. Marion Scrymgour has referred all enquiries to her department. In this instance the department refused to speak to the media. Even the members of the EPA are keeping their heads down because they realise that their reputations will ultimately be sullied over this when the Government rolls over and they know that there will be no Ministerial protection for them. Kon Vatskalis disappeared overseas when the problem was growing. To his credit he’s given an interview to the ABC about this and the journalist called his stonewalling frustrating.

**Education**, Syd has fronted a press conference expecting his middle schools proposal to be embraced and when it wasn’t he’s dropped off the radar and we now see the consultant answering the questions.

**Heath**, the Minister for Health Robert Griew has replaced Peter Toyne completely. Never have hospitals in the Territory received so much criticism and never has a Minister been so completely missing in action.

**Law and Order**, The Police Association attacks the Government and Paul Henderson makes no comment to the NT News at all when they run the story.

**Gaming**, the government is being criticised for making chook raffles illegal and again it is a public servant that is trotted out to answer the difficult questions. (By the way unless you’re an “approved association” a chook raffle will remain illegal, a public servant said that).

“The Ministers only come out of hiding when there is good news to be had. The problem is that public servants are being used to deal with what are political issues. The public service is constituted by dedicated people who should be allowed to get on with their jobs, not become the public face of Government shortcomings.” Jodeen Carney said.

*Sung to the tune of “Where have all the flowers Gone” (Peter Paul and Mary) lyrics by Pete Seeger

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