6 February, 1997

IS THE MAYOR OFF THE RAILS?

Lands, Planning and Environment Minister, Mike Reed, has called on Mayor, Jim Forscutt, to clarify the Katherine Town Council's position in relation to the Alice Springs to Darwin rail corridor.

In last week's 'Katherine Times', the Mayor criticised the proposed route, claiming it to be inappropriately located.

"Whey didn't Mr Forscutt raise these issues when he was asked to?"

The draft Land Use Objectives for the corridor were released in July last year.

The council then wrote to the Lands, Planning and Environment Department on 5 September, 1996, advising that the document on the proposed rail route had been circulated to members, and that, quote:

"In general discussion, members felt that the re-routing of the corridor to the south of town was a necessary alteration to the existing corridor, even if it does mean additional cost through the construction of a new bridge across the Katherine River.

"I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the objectives, and Council looks forward to the advancement of this project."

Mr Reed said it now seems that either the council has changed its mind, or the mayor is contradicting his own council's advice.

"If they go around changing their minds like shifting sands in the desert, they are going to be very difficult to deal with.

"I have written to the Mayor, calling on him to clearly state Council's position in relation to the rail corridor.

"Do they support it, as indicated by their written advice of last September, or oppose, according to the mayor's comments of last week?"

Ref: R-51-97