CHAIRMAN OF THE BORED

The Territory Opposition has discovered the Health Minister, Chris Burns, has flaunted his legal obligations to table an annual report from each of the Territory’s five hospitals for the past 2 financial years.

“The Health Minister, who is also Attorney General, has been in breach of the Hospital Management Boards Act from virtually the moment he took over the job,” says Matt Conlan, Shadow Minister for Health.

“The fact 10 annual Management Board Reports from Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Gove have not been tabled for two years demonstrates the job got away from the Health Minister right from the start.

(Of course it has allowed the Health Minister to avoid scrutiny on the Territory’s hospitals poor performance in meeting national triage targets. The 2005/06 annual report for RDH shows the hospital well behind the national triage targets for categories 2, 3 and 4.

“Nor are the Attorney General’s failings confined to Health. He has also previously apologised to Parliament for failing to table annual reports for the Community Benefits Fund and the Gaming Control Act.

“The Attorney General’s haphazard approach to his legal obligations is totally unacceptable from the first law officer in the Territory.

“Nor has the Attorney General’s legal failures been confined to the tabling of annual reports.

“The Health Complaints Commissioner noticed that there had been just one notice of an appointment to the RDH Board of Management placed in the Government Gazette between 2002 and 2008.

“Failure to comply with the statutory requirements for gazetting board members would never have been allowed by a Minister on the ball.
“Add the RDH’s systemic failure to take concrete steps to improve security in the paediatrics ward after the sexual assault of the 5 month old infant and it’s clear the Minister has been sleep walking since taking over the Health portfolio.

“Despite the repeated errors made by the Minister he still refuses to shoulder the blame for the failings of the Department he’s paid to manage.”

Further comment: Matt Conlan 0408 805 338