END THE CULTURE OF COVER-UP

The Territory Opposition is demanding the Chief Minister commits to publicly releasing the complete, unedited report from the Inquiry into the Child Protection System in the Northern Territory.

“The Henderson Government has a history of suppressing the reports of taxpayer-funded investigations that should be made public.

“Most recently Kon Vatskalis the Minister for Child Protection suppressed the 2009 intake report into child protection services authored by the Children’s Commissioner Dr Bath.

“The Minister suppressed that report despite a commitment from the previous Minister Malarndirri McCarthy to release it.

MELINDA JAMES: We never saw the last major report from Doctor Bath in 2007 - will this report be made public?  
MALARNDIRRI MCCARTHY: This report will be made public as far as it's able to in terms of confidentiality. Of course if it does refer to specific clients, that is going to depend on Dr Bath in terms of how he can talk about particular clients but as far as I'm concerned this document will be public.

“Whilst a copy of the 2007 Bath Report has been leaked the Henderson Government is still refusing to make it available to the wider public.

“Had the 2007 Bath Report been released when the Government received it and had the Report attracted proper scrutiny there is every possibility that the 2009 case of a motherless child receiving brain damage upon leaving Royal Darwin Hospital may never have happened.

“Both the 2007 Bath Report, initiated in the wake of the death of Deborah Melville, and the 2009 Bath Report should be released today.

“That show of good faith needs to complement an unqualified commitment to release the report of the Inquiry that began today.

“The Minister for Child Protection should also name who will be replacing Dr Bath as Children’s Commissioner whilst he is chairing the Inquiry into the Child Protection System in the Northern Territory.”

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