The Environment Minister has a duty to tell Territorians the exact nature of staffing within Parks and Wildlife and his failure to do so should be treated with the deepest suspicion.

Shadow Environment Minister, Peter Chandler, said the Minister’s evasion when asked about executive staffing within the agency shone a light on Labor’s inability to tell the truth to the community.

"He was asked about the appointment of three senior executives and the shrinking of actual frontline employees within Parks and Wildlife," Mr Chandler said.

"His unwillingness to answer the question, which was put to him on several occasions, was contemptuous and suggests the Minister:

a) didn’t want to tell the truth;
b) didn’t know the answer

"The Minister should tell us exactly how many additional executive staff have been appointed and how much this is costing.

"As well, he should outline staffing levels within Parks and Wildlife, given the importance of the agency to community safety.

"In his report into last year’s death of an 11-year-old girl, Coroner Greg Cavanagh stressed the importance of adequate resourcing to control crocodile numbers in the Top End.

"The Minister’s silence on this very important issue and the lack of certainty about the structure of park ranger services is a concern.

"When he released the Government’s crocodile management plan last year he promised increased resources, unfortunately these don’t appear to have been delivered on the front-line.

"Instead the Government has sought expressions of interest with a view to out-sourcing crocodile management.

"The Minister was also evasive about when this would happen, on the one hand saying it would be ‘soon’, on the other a decision would be made by the end of the year.

"Crocodiles remain a threat to the community, particularly in Darwin’s rural area."

Further comment: Peter Chandler 0429 076 493