MEDIA RELEASE

LIFTING THE LID ON WATER POLLUTION

Thursday June 28th, 2012

The Country Liberals are questioning the reliability and veracity of water quality testing in Darwin Harbour and whether water quality test results are being posted in a timely manner.

Shadow Environment Minister, Peter Chandler says harbour water quality test results show anomalies in the posting of data on the Government website.

On Monday, two days of water quality tests were posted on the Health Department website – one for Thursday June 21st and the other for Friday June 22nd.

“The June 21st results showed bacteria levels at Casuarina and Mindil beaches were above recommended levels and would-be beach goers should have been told of unacceptably high Enterococci results,” Mr Chandler said.

“However these results were not posted until early this week when ‘updated’ results were also posted which gave both beaches a clean bill of health.

“Late yesterday, more results were posted which again showed Casuarina Beach should have been closed and that Mindil Beach required further testing.

“I am concerned that accurate information is not being posted in time to provide proper alerts for swimmers.

“I am also concerned that results from the second test appear to be at odds with the tests conducted before and after.

“This Government has a history of glossing over poor water quality tests.

“Last year we had the unedifying spectacle of Government trying to cover-up dodgy water quality data on the eve of Arafura Games, now we need answers
Mr Chandler’s FOI request seeks:

- Documentation related to monitoring of beaches in Darwin Harbour for pollution between June 1 and June 29th, 2012
- Copies of sample submission sheets, sample analysis laboratory reports related to the monitoring and other documents provided in relation to the monitoring to the Department of Health
- Correspondence received related to monitoring data and documents as loaded to the departmental website as a result of each updated report.

Mr Chandler said given the Harbour is still recording high bacteria levels despite the closure of the Larrakeyah Outfall, the search must continue for the cause of pollution.

“The Government stopped testing for e-coli last year, so there is an expectation among Territorians that the Enterococci tests are accurate, comprehensive and timely.”

(See Attached Document)

Further comment: Peter Chandler 0429 076 493

Supporting Documents

Water Quality Results