Govt dithers for six months and still no phones at passenger terminal

The admission today by the Chief Minister that passengers arriving in Darwin on the Ghan will have to wait at least another six to eight weeks before communication and transport problems at the terminal are rectified is a damning indictment on the Government's tardy approach to our rail infrastructure, CLP Shadow Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Denis Burke said today.

Mr Burke said the Chief Minister is right when she claimed today in Parliament that more and more the Ghan service is a great adventure.

"Sadly this Government has allowed it to become an adventure for all the wrong reasons," Mr Burke said.

"There are no phone lines at the terminal in Darwin. Passengers without a mobile phone have no way to ring for a taxi, mini bus or hire car. Operators of the Ghan have to manually manifest and load passengers as there is no computer link and getting off the train because there is no raise platforms has been a challenge for the for the elderly.

"The Ghan is a great product that after more than six months is still not being given the infrastructure support it deserves from the Martin Government."

Mr Burke said the Government has a responsibility to protect the $200 million investment in the railway by Territorians.

"The only thing this Government had to do on the railway when it took over Government was to get the arrival of the first train right and to make sure we had three good terminals. It failed on both accounts," Mr Burke said.

"In Katherine there is an off-loading ramp for vehicles to allow tourists to leave the train with their vehicles if they wish. It has been reported this has become an impossible task because there is no-one who knows how to operate it properly.

"That the Martin Government could scrap the construction of raised platforms is beyond belief. It has become the single biggest complaint of passengers from the train.

"This was never more evident than the recent tragic events at Tennant Creek involving the removal of the body of a deceased passenger.

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