The longer the Martin Government refuses to acknowledge it has a problem at the Alice Springs Hospital the longer the crisis will continue CLP Leader Terry Mills said today.

Mr Mills said rather than accept what doctors and nurses are saying and what the Australian Medical Association has been saying, the Government spent two censure debates blaming everyone for daring to complain about the crisis.

“To criticise those who dare to speak up about the crisis rather than doing anything meaningful about it is not only short-sighted, but it is dangerous,” Mr Mills said.

“Health Minister Peter Toyne has been a failure as a Health Minister and his attitude has failed to convince the people of Alice Springs that he is up the task of solving the current crisis at the hospital.

“The doctors and nurses at the Alice Springs Hospital are not talking the hospital down as the Government and the Member for Braitling claimed today. Rather they are speaking out because of their very real concerns for the safety and well being of patients in the Alice Springs Hospital – particularly those in the Intensive Care Unit.

“Rather than attack the messenger this Government would do well to start listening.”

Mr Mills said it was petulant and arrogant of Government to attempt to gag debate in Parliament today over its handling of the Alice Springs Hospital crisis.

“Gagging debate during the censures was typical of the way the Government has tried to run away from the hospital crisis,” Mr Mills said.

“The Martin Government and particularly Health Minister Toyne must carry the blame for the crisis for failing to show the leadership and support hospital staff has asked from him.

“The Government deserves to be censured for the disgraceful way it has let the staff, patients and people of Alice Springs down. If Government were truly serious about supporting the staff and the people of Alice Springs to continue to
provide high-class care in Alice Springs Hospital it would not have allowed these problems to go on for more than nine months.”

Ends