



GARY HIGGINS

OPPOSITION LEADER

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Chief Minister interferes in due process on property development

The Chief Minister has interfered in the statutory, independent planning process and is killing the Northern Territory economy, one project at a time.

The Leader of the Opposition, Gary Higgins said that the Chief Minister has not only stifled further private investment in the Territory, but effectively ‘pulled rank’ on a construction project, earmarked for Blake Street, The Gardens.

“The Chief Minister personally intervened on this project in an unprecedented way.

“On his Chief Ministerial letterhead, dated 21 December 2016, he requested that the Development Consent Authority (DCA), a statutory approval authority, get the Government Architect to evaluate the proposed design.

“This additional step has never been heard of before, was not required, and is a misuse of the position of Government Architect.

“This is also in direct contradiction to commentary from the Chief Minister’s own cabinet colleague and Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics who is reported as saying in July, 2017:

“To have interfered in the independent process of the DCA would have created uncertainty across the Territory....it is vital to respect due process as development applications are exhibited and determined by the independent DCA.”

“The question has to be asked, how many more developments does the Chief Minister want to stop and how many letters of this nature has he sent?

“At a time when our trades and construction industry are desperate for work and future jobs, we have the Chief Minister personally intervening to stop developments and put Territorians out of work.

“The Chief Minister’s intervention, the possible changes to the planning laws and the latest tribunal decision all undermine certainty in developments at a time when we can least afford it.

“This is not honest, not open and not a transparent process, despite the Chief Minister’s rhetoric around honest government and restoring trust,” said Mr Higgins.

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