

<p>COUNTRY LIBERALS</p>	
	<p>MEDIA RELEASE</p>
	<p>WHISTLEBLOWER WITCH-HUNT</p>
	<p>Robyn Lambley MLA</p>
	<p>Date 13th July 2011</p>
	<p>The Henderson Government must immediately end its systemic campaign of harassment against former hospital social worker, Susan Mansfield.</p> <p>Shadow Child Protection Minister, Robyn Lambley, said revelations the Government hired a private investigator to probe Ms Mansfield's claims of departmental harassment show the paranoid depths this Government has reached.</p> <p>"This is a Government witch-hunt of a public servant who went public with serious concerns about the welfare of children in Government care," Ms Lambley said.</p> <p>"Instead of examining Ms Mansfield's claims of bullying, the private investigator focused on Ms Mansfield's role in exposing gross negligence in the handling of child protection cases at Royal Darwin Hospital.</p> <p>"Ms Mansfield featured on last year's 4 Corners program, Dangerous Territory, which highlighted monumental failures in the Territory's child protection system.</p> <p>"One case involved an infant who sustained permanent brain damage after he was placed in the care of family members despite warnings by Ms Mansfield about the child's safety.</p> <p>"Instead of dealing with Ms Mansfield's bullying claims, the Department has requested she show cause why she should not be disciplined.</p> <p>"According to Ombudsman Carolyn Richards, who raised the issue on ABC radio this morning, the Department acted because Ms Mansfield made written complaints to the child protection service, ignoring an instruction to only make verbal complaints.</p> <p>"Ms Mansfield took that action because of concerns no records were available of previous verbal complaints she had made.</p> <p>"This is another example of the Department's culture of cover-up.</p> <p>Ms Lambley said Minister Vatskalis refused to answer questions during Estimates hearings last month on the state of the investigation into Ms Mansfield.</p> <p>"The Minister ducked and weaved and refused to answer questions about the investigation, and it's now clear why," Ms Lambley said.</p> <p>"The Minister showed he was prepared to do nothing while a public servant was dragged over the coals.</p> <p>"Labor's witch-hunt of Susan Mansfield must end immediately."</p> <p>Further comment: Robyn Lambley 0428 040 693</p>