Ssh, this party’s a secret

One Territory so hush-hush not even members told

member, who coincidentally asked to remain anonymous. “There’s no transparency here.”

The party elected its executive management team on December 12 at its inaugural meeting. The winners of those positions and other committees have been kept secret since.

“You’ve got to keep your members informed, you announce it to all members so there’s some transparency,” the member said. The party, which only recently became official, has billed itself as an independent, grassroots party. But the member says he smells shades of the Country Liberals.

“They’re hand-picking everyone,” he said. “They’re all high-profile business people who have hand-picked their own people, have hand-picked their own candidates. It’s not really an independent party. All the ones running it are ex-CLP members.”

Former CLP president and founder of One Territory, Braedon Earley revealed he is on the executive team. He said yesterday he has to keep the other executive members anonymous to protect them from Government retribution.

“We haven’t released the names in order to protect the individuals and their related businesses from the vindictive nature of both major political parties in the NT, past and present,” he said, adding many of his members fear losing government contracts if their names are revealed.

Mr Earley did not offer a time frame for when the executive and other committees would be made public, saying that would be up to the anonymous executive.

But Mr Earley did offer a few hints on who the party’s candidates will be.

“I’m not saying we’re not gonna try and get alcoholics in there, but I’m just saying there will be hoops and hurdles for people to jump through on a regular basis,” he said, adding random drug and alcohol testing will be mandatory. “You need to be fit for the job and the party now has 300 members.”

Wildlife Park bid ‘tricky’ prospect

Rayley Sorensen and Christopher Walsh

THE Territory Government face a tough sell trying to attract private sector investment to the Territory Wildlife Park, says a competitor to the facility.

The Government has called for expressions of interest for investment proposals to help revitalise the park, which costs about $8 million to run each year, only $2 million of which is recouped through ticket sales.

Each of the 60,000 tickets sold each year is subsidised by the government by about $100.

Graham Webb, who runs competing wildlife attraction Crocodylus Park, said getting investors on board would be “tricky”.

“(Tourism) is by no means a lucrative business, it’s a very hard business,” he said.

Dr Webb has in the past called for the park’s deregulation, saying it created an unlevel playing field for other tourism operators.

“Territory taxpayers put a lot of money into the Territory Wildlife Park – a huge amount over the years,” he said.

“It’s made it hard for us. How are you supposed to compete – with an organisation that has unlimited money and no pressure on them to be profitable?”

Chief Minister Adam Giles said money sunk into the park by the Government was offset by the benefits of wildlife conservation and local employment.

“We might just put a little financial investment from the NT Government into the wildlife park, I think it’s money well spent,” he said.

Daly River residents to return for big clean-up

Evacuees from the flooded Daly River community will return home as early as this weekend.

Chief Minister Adam Giles said he expected the recovery phase would begin this afternoon, before people were allowed to return to begin the clean-up at the start of the weekend.

About 480 Daly River residents have been living at Darwin Showgrounds Fokey Pavilion since Boxing Day.

Mr Giles said the pavilion was the “best level of accommodation” that could be provided to evacuees.

“Sure I’d like to be able to see people housed in five-star accommodation but making sure people’s health and wellbeing and safety is paramount in the first place is what we’ve been able to do,” he said.

Fokey Pavilion has been used as crisis accommodation three times in the past year, for the Daly River flooding and for people affected by ex-tropical cyclones Nathan and Liam.

Darwin Show Society chief executive Cherry Court said it made sense for the Government to invest in a purpose-built facility, whether that be by upgrading the Fokey Pavilion or building a separate centre elsewhere.

She said the ageing facility was “stretched to the limit” in times of crisis.

The showgrounds’ shower and sewerage facilities in particular struggled to cope.

Ms Court said while Fokey was “an ideal location in many ways”, it needed upgrading.

Rayley Sorensen is a reporter at NT News.