

# The Territory's first federal minister- What he'll be doing in parliament

**The Northern Territory's first Federal Minister, Senator Bob Collins, this week outlines his ministerial responsibilities.**

The Department of Transport and Communications is one of the largest of all Government Departments and is broken up into five major divisions.

These are Broadcasting, Radio Communications and Technology Development, Telecommunications, Aviation, Land Transport (Road and Rail) and Maritime.

There is a review currently underway to reallocate the division of responsibility within the portfolio among the three ministers, Mr. Beazley, Mr. Brown and myself.

The detailed review will be completed within two weeks and at that time Minister Beazley will write to Mr. Brown, myself and his Parliamentary secretary Mr. Snowdon detailing our responsibilities.

What has been made clear at this stage is that I will be responsible for the Maritime Division, which will include, among other things, direct responsibility for the Australian National Line, The Waterfront Industry Reform Authority, and the Shipping Industry Reform Authority.

I will also be responsible for Aviation Support.

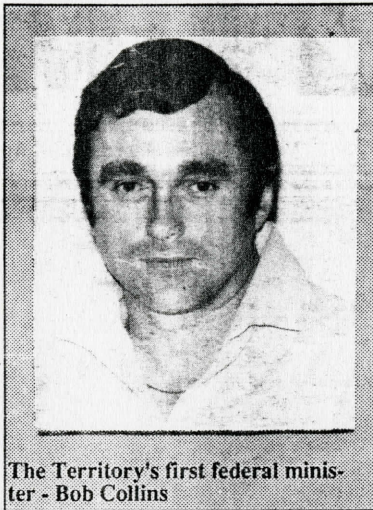
This will involve direct responsibility for the Civil Aviation Authority, The Federal Airports Corporation, and the Bureau of Air Safety Investigation.

In addition to these responsibilities I will be Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Northern Australia.

I will be holding discussions with the Governments of Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory and with all the Federal MP's involved to ensure a co-ordinated approach to this vital area.

The brief for Northern Australia will be to bring before the Government proposals that will enhance the development of Northern Australia and at the same time maintain an overview of all Government policies which may affect the region.

This will involve the establishment of a small office in



The Territory's first federal minister - Bob Collins

Townsville.

I intend to service the North of Western Australia from Darwin at this stage.

In addition I will be the Minister representing the Minister for Transport and Communications in the Senate and Minister representing the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Senate.

## Back-ground briefing

Labor wants a modern, growing economy, shaken out of the old complacent dependence on commodity export, reequipped and restructured in its attitudes, institutions and technology to be fully competitive in the world.

Labor's achievements in micro-economic reform have already been far reaching but there are ten central elements to our fourth term agenda in this vital area.

I will be closely involved in a number of key areas, principally, shipping, the waterfront, aviation, and the further development of Northern Australia.

### Shipping

As outlined by the Prime Minister during the recent election campaign the Government's international shipping reforms in 1988 have received universal approval.

On coastal shipping we plan to implement the recently revised guidelines allowing foreign flag ships to engage in Australian

trade where domestic services are inadequate.

The success of this change will be vital for the future of new resource based projects.

The incentives we have already provided to overhaul this industry are a precondition for pragmatic change which allows competition by retains jobs.

Under our reforms new vessels are being rapidly introduced, half of which are net additions to the fleet.

ANL has been returned to profitability. OECD standard manning levels have been achieved, with out strikes, on more than a third of the fleet and we aim to ensure that, by 1992, the rest of the fleet achieves this goal.

BHP has already shown the way. It profitably operates Australian crewed vessels on triangulated runs internationally and on the coast.

We will be discussing with New Zealand means of lifting union bans on foreign vessels on the Tasman.

These discussions need to involve unions from both countries and to focus on freeing up specific trades.

### The waterfront

The Government aims to achieve a more than 20% increase in productivity in this term through: redundancies for 3000 water-side workers; 1000 new and more skilled employees; transition to enterprise employment; training and multi-skilling of the workforce; and removal of outmoded management and work practices. These are reforms unmatched since containerisation.

We are concerned about the lack of competition on the water-

front. The Government has increased the resources of the Trade Practices Commission to allow them to investigate restrictive practices on the waterfront. We will now ask the TPC to report on any other activities which restrict competition or inhibit efficiency.

Stevedoring costs will be further decreased during this term by the replacement of antiquated paper transactions with electronic data interchange.

This development, which will flow into road, rail and air cargo transport, stems directly from reform on the waterfront.

It will lower costs by up to \$200 m per annum.

It will also improve timeliness and reliability of cargo movement.

These reforms will lift waterfront productivity.

### Aviation

The most significant impediments to growth in Australia's tourism industry are the regulations limiting aviation.

This is the clear conclusion of both the Industries Commission and the Garnaut Report.

We will continue to remove those impediments.

From November, new airlines will be able to compete on major routes for the first time.

Already, at least two operators have fore-shadowed genuine competition to the existing airlines.

The Hawke Government has ensured gateway access at major terminals for new entrants by negotiating terminal leases.

The Federal Airports Corporation, the operator of our airport facilities, is discussing with airlines the establishment of common user facilities.

Where essential facilities would otherwise remain undeveloped, we will accept, as Ross Garnaut recommended, private development of airport or terminal facilities.

We are conducting a joint study of a single aviation market between Australian and New Zealand. It's appropriate to accelerate our consideration of trade in services, including the current exclusion of aviation from the Closer Economic Relations Agreement between Australia and New Zealand.

This naturally leads to questions about domestic rights for

Qantas and Air New Zealand, international aviation rights for domestic operators and the future possible links between Qantas and Australian Airlines.

We are also looking at the feasibility of a new international air freight operator. Proposals from a number of companies are now before the Government.

The Hawke Government crucial decision to build the Third Runway at Kingsford Smith Airport shows, we have the commitment to take the tough decisions in this area.

The third runway cannot, however, be built for some years.

The Government will implement a system to allocate landing slots in peak periods following receipt of a traffic management review in the next few months.

On the local level the Government programme is on track for the completion of the major new facilities at the Darwin and Alice Springs Airports by the end of next year.

### Northern Australia

My brief for Northern Australia will be to bring before the Government proposals that will enhance the development of the region and at the same time maintain an overview of all Government policies which may affect those of us who live in the region.

This will involve the establishment of a small office in Townsville. I intend, at this stage, to service the North of Western Australia from Darwin.

I will be holding discussions with the Government's of Queensland, Western Australia, the Northern Territory and with all the Federal MP's involved to ensure a coordinated approach to this vital area.

The major issue is continued economic growth through the key Resources, Tourism and Pastoral Industries and Defence.

Developments in the Transport Industry will also have a major impact on the region.

I will be well placed as Minister representing the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in the Senate to maintain a close liaison with all key bodies in this area.

There are also many key environmental questions which will need to be addressed.