

By ALYSSA BETTS  
Political Reporter

NT WorkSafe has been keeping secret four recommendations of an internal review — most of them to do with the agency's boss and her management style.

It found executive director Laurene Hull should get coaching to be a better boss, apologise to staff for a door fiasco and relinquish power over "independent" reviews



Laurene Hull

into her decision making. The 2009 review, by Walter Bellin, said WorkSafe was "haemorrhaging staff at an alarming rate".

"The reasons for these valuable employees leaving all have to do with their perception, overall, of how WorkSafe is being managed," the report said.

It made 17 recommenda-

tions to improve things. But WorkSafe only ever publicly acknowledged 13 — until asked by the *NT News*.

Ms Hull said the report was not required to be made public, and was also "less than satisfactory".

"Four of its 17 recommendations were not released to staff as they were either irrelevant, fell outside the scope of the consultancy, compromised staff privacy or were based solely on the

author's point of view," she wrote.

CLP politician John Elferink grilled Ms Hull about the report in June's estimates hearings. He says the agency is dysfunctional and needs new management.

But Attorney General Delia Lawrie's spokesman Patrick Hastwell said that Mr Elferink was on a "witch-hunt".

"The minister has full confidence in the executive di-

rector of WorkSafe," he said. The review identified concerns with Ms Hull's powers.

It said the WorkSafe staffer who did internal reviews then reported to Ms Hull.

"(It) could lead to a perception that she is in a position to directly influence or determine the outcomes of a process that is meant to independently review her decisions."

Ms Hull said this recommendation had been ignored because the author had "not

clearly understood" the report process.

Another recommendation was that Ms Hull use a coach to work on her strengths and weaknesses. It said while she was driven and dedicated, she tended to micromanage, could be intimidating, and made "barbed comments".

The review also said workplace relations were so strained that a management move to lock a back door sparked deep resentment.



HyLogger operator Darren Bowbridge examines core samples as part of an NT Government program to encourage companies to explore for minerals in the Northern Territory

Picture: KATRINA BRIDGEFORD

## Hendo hands out rich rewards for treasure hunters

By ALYSSA BETTS

GOLD diggers struck it rich with the Northern Territory Government yesterday.

Seven treasure hunters — also known as mining companies — have been given \$600,000 in Government grants to explore virgin parts of the Territory.

Chief Minister Paul Henderson and Resources Minister Kon Vatskalis visited Darwin Core Store in Winnellie, where workers analyse core samples from all over the NT, to announce the winning recipients.

"What this is all about is investment... in our exploration industry, leading to

new mines being developed," Mr Henderson said.

Mr Vatskalis said the NT mining exploration sector was on track to spend \$180 million this year.

"(That's) unheard of in the Territory," he said.

Opposition deputy leader Kezia Purick said that the Government should explain

why the grants were \$200,000 less this time around — down from \$800,000 in the previous year.

"The reduction suggests a drop in confidence within the mining sector as the Government prepares to increase red tape through amendments to the Mines Management Act," she said.

"The Native Vegetation Legislation, which will seriously curb the capacity to clear land, is also a serious disincentive."

The grants, under the Geophysics and Drilling Collaborations program, give companies 50 per cent of their costs — up to \$100,000 — to explore greenfields areas.

"What it speaks to is the growing frustration in the Australian community about the continued support afforded this trade in the face of irrefutable cruelty against Australian animals," she said.

"All we ask is that the Prime Minister allows MPs a free vote so they can not only be a voice for their electorates but for the millions of animals subjected to the cruelty of live export every year."

## Thumbs up for health lesson

ABORIGINAL children are The interactive, 12-lesson vital health and wellbeing

## Worry over latest job figures

A PEAK business body says January to 4.2 per cent many sectors of the economy