The Education Minister should immediately release two reviews the Labor Government has conducted into special education in the Northern Territory.

Opposition Leader Terry Mills said the two reviews would shine a light on the requirements of the Territory’s special schools – Nemarluk, Henbury and Acacia Hill specifically.

The first review, Planning for Future Service Provision for Students with a Disability in Darwin and Palmerston 2006-07 has never seen the light of day and a report commissioned before the 2008 election to consider long term strategies to improve special education services across the Territory has also never been made public.

“Principals, teachers, school councils and the parents of disabled students have not seen either of these reports,” Mr Mills said.

“Their release would go a long way to establish a long term strategic plan for children with special needs across the Territory.”

Mr Mills said there is widespread disenchantment with the Henderson Government at Nemarluk School, with the school council frustrated at the lack of action to improve sub-standard facilities and a lack of space.

The school’s three priority issues are a lack of room to expand, grow or replace; lack of teaching and administrative space and antiquated, under maintained facilities.

“The Government’s neglect of Nemarluk is quite alarming given the crucial role it plays in educating and supporting special needs students,” Mr Mills said.
“The 2008 investigation was commissioned before last year’s Territory election with a view to silencing criticism from special school representatives. To not release that report appears duplicitous in the extreme.

Labor has also badly let down the Centralian community by failing to act on an audit conducted four years ago at Acacia Hill that identified 75 breaches of the Government’s own disability services policy.

“The Government’s lack of urgency is staggering,” Mr Mills said.

“The Country Liberals’ spokesman for Central Australia Matt Conlan brought the issue to community notice last month when he pointed out that recommendations from the 2005 audit had not been acted upon.

“The Henderson Government should work more closely with special school councils and address the serious issues they currently face.”

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594