A YEAR OF CLP CHAOS, DESTRUCTION AND ARROGANCE

As the year comes to an end the Leader of the Opposition, Delia Lawrie, looked back on what the CLP has done to the Territory during 2013.

“This was not a great year under the CLP government where we’ve seen two Chief Ministers and many cabinet reshuffles,” Ms Lawrie said.

“There were blatant displays of chaotic mismanagement, destructive behaviour and arrogance by the CLP throughout the year. Jobs and programs were slashed without any evidence-based approaches to new policies.

“The hardest hit was the community of Nhulunbuy with the Chief Minister Adam Giles rolling over to Rio Tinto’s decision to close their alumina refinery despite a lease that requires the company to operate a refinery. He then stands by and allows a brutal pace of industrial shutdown that will see thousands of jobs lost.

“The bungling of gas to Gove has seen not just a dramatic impact on Nhulunbuy and the region but will have a reverberating impact on our economy – with Treasury expecting about a 2 per cent reduction in Gross State Product (GSP). Sadly it means there won’t be the doubling of the domestic gas market which would have yielded significant new investment in the oil and gas sector.

“The CLP had promised to “Grow a three-hub economy” yet the mining industry said the CLP Government was not open for business and out of touch with their industry when they introduced new levies. No new agricultural land has been developed, instead we’ve seen the CLP grant millions of dollars in water rights to their mate Tina McFarlane and then open up a water trading scheme.

The Territory education system also got torn apart this year by the Minister for Education, Peter Chandler, rather than the promised “economic hub” growth expected.

“The CLP promised to train and employ more local teachers but instead have plunged education into crisis by cutting about 120 teacher positions along with 150 support positions being cut or regionalised,” Ms Lawrie said.

“The exact number of teacher and support staff positions being cut are still unknown as the Education Minister still has not released a school-by-school breakdown and we’re hearing decisions to cut have been reversed in remote schools as the government desperately scrambles to keep an increasingly unstable backbench in the team.
“Teachers, parents and students have rallied to stop these cuts and will continue to advocate for a return to investment in education in the New Year.”

The CLP promised to cut the cost of living but instead the CLP’s power price hikes have given Darwin the highest annual rate of inflation in the nation.

“Territorians are also due to receive another five per cent increase to their power bills tomorrow on 1 January – adding another $300 to the average household yearly bill which had increased by $2000 already this year,” Ms Lawrie said.

“The CLP promised to “Be accountable” but police and other public servants have been gagged, reports are kept secret and controversial announcements are made late on Fridays like the announcements to privatise Darwinbus and the Government Printing Office or during Christmas holidays as we have seen with the release of the Rapid Creek Flood Risk Management Discussion Paper and the Towards a Darwin Regional Land Use Plan.

“The CLP promised to “Strengthen law and order” but instead violent crime is spiralling out of control with alcohol related crime up by more than 11 per cent across the Territory. In Darwin, alcohol related assaults are up by more than 12 per cent and domestic assaults have increased by nearly 19 per cent.

“The CLP have also introduced flawed alcohol legislation slapping Alcohol Protection Orders on problem drinkers but failing to have a way of cutting off supply of alcohol at point of sale to these offenders.

“The CLP promised to reduce debt but instead under their watch debt has risen $1.1 billion in a single year and services are being cut.

“The CLP promised to “Plan properly for the future of the Northern Territory” but scrapped the popular Arafura Games that ensured we engaged positively with our Asian neighbours and have rolled out discredited 1990s plans to dam our rivers around Darwin Harbour.

“The CLP promised to reduce the cost of housing but over the last year the cost of rent in Darwin has increased 7.9 per cent, and the cost of buying a home in Darwin has risen by 8.3 per cent.

“The CLP promised no public servants would be sacked but teachers and child protection workers have been sacked with at least 600 public servants slashed while Adam Giles laughs at critical care nurses highlighting a double-bunking crisis in our emergency department at Royal Darwin Hospital.

“The CLP promised to cut advisors and spin doctors but instead employed 13 former CLP candidates and members and hired their mates for a $1 million Renewal
Management Board interim report that was ultimately ignored and discredited when the CLP realised that the Labor-initiated Marine Supply Base was an asset.

“Overall it was a very trying year for Territorians under the CLP Government when it could have been so much better as the Territory was positioned as the fastest growing economy in the nation when Labor secured the major Ichthys project. Sadly we’re seeing an emerging haves and have-nots as the arrogant CLP ministers refuse to listen to Territorians’ needs.

“Territorians are resilient and increasingly they are speaking up against the stupidity of this CLP Government. The Opposition looks forward to holding them to account in 2014.”

**Media contact:** Cathryn Tilmouth 0427 500 667