TOLLNER’S SMOKE AND MIRRORS TO MASK PAIN

Leader of the Opposition, Delia Lawrie, today said the CLP Government’s second Budget today has revealed the CLP Government is using smokes and mirrors to hide their mean and tricky actions.

“The CLP are now the highest taxing government in the Territory’s history, with Budget 2014 predicting a tax revenue of $569 million, which is a $84 million increase on Labor’s last budget,” Ms Lawrie said.

“Not content with taxing businesses and families the Treasurer has joined his mates in Canberra by going after senior Territorians to means test them out of the Pensioner Concession Scheme which was designed to keep the elder generation in the Territory to anchor families here.

“The CLP touted this Budget as the big spend on infrastructure yet their own figures show a reduction in the cash spend of about $10 million and their revote out (works not completed) will be larger than their revote in – an extraordinary admittance of failure.”

Ms Lawrie said the CLP is reaping the benefits of a Commonwealth GST recovery yet today’s budget reveals the CLP is doubling debt from that inherited under Labor, with an increase of $660 million in net debt between 13/14 and 14/15 financial years.

“The CLP Government are increasing debt, remaining in deficit and continue to cut crucial services such as education, health and housing in real terms,” Ms Lawrie said.

“Territorians are feeling the pain of the CLP cash grab through increased utility and registration charges, with the inflation spike attributed to utility and car rego hikes.”

Ms Lawrie said the good news in the budget is what everyone knows, the Territory’s strong economic growth is fuelled off the back of the major oil and gas projects delivered under Labor, but the bad news is the hit to growth from the Nhulunbuy refinery curtailment is still unknown.

“The problem with the CLP is that they are still coasting off the back of Labor projects – from roads infrastructure to the significant private projects – without delivering new stimulus for jobs and business growth which continues the two-speed economy,” Ms Lawrie said.
“Local families and businesses were looking for relief now but instead in a cruel blow they get hollow promises of land release not even off the drawing board and a removal of the First Home Owners grant used to get Territorians into the existing housing market.

“This is a Budget of missed opportunities where the CLP are still ignoring the needs of Territorians for affordable and public housing, improved education and health services and support to the most disadvantaged.”

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