Terry Mills
Leader of the Opposition

Chief Minister to be made to account for wasted millions and zero growth economy

21 June 2004

The Chief Minister will face scrutiny over the real cost to Territory families of the millions wasted by the pool fencing debacle, the lack of public access to important community decisions such as the plans for our water front and her plans for the handover and lease back of Territory Parks during Budget questioning tomorrow.

CLP Leader Terry Mills said much of the focus of questioning of the Chief Minister will be her management of the Territory economy and two years of zero growth marked by a declining population and record lows in business confidence in her administration.

“The struggle for cash strapped Territory families to get by has been made harder by the Martin Government - the highest taxing Government the Territory has had,” Mr Mills said.

“An analysis of the budget reveals that the tax take has increased under Labor. In fact no Government has ever received so much tax.

“Territory Stamp Duty, Payroll Tax, Gaming taxes and Motor Vehicle Registration receipts are at record levels.

“GST receipts of more than $400 million have not been used to grow the economy. Apart from increased public sector spending Territory families have not seen much for their tax dollars, nothing to support the real and sustainable development of the Territory.

“The declining population has serious social and economic implications for the Territory. The Government's misguided fiscal strategy has resulted in population decline and a shrinking skilled workforce.

“Too many good Territorians have given up on the Territory because this Government has failed to deliver on its economic promises.

“For three years this Government has been telling Territorians that things are going to get better. Yet for the last two years, and despite record funding from the Federal Government, the Territory has recorded no growth.”

Mr Mills said the Chief Minister will also face scrutiny over her Government's largesse within her own fifth floor offices that has seen her staff for eight Ministers swell to a level well above what the former CLP Government had for nine Ministers.

“We will also be looking at the theft of office equipment from the Chief Minister’s
offices and its cost to Territory taxpayers,” Mr Mills said.

“The Chief Minister may think that by facing Budget questioning late in the evening she will be protected from full public scrutiny. It won't.”

Ends