Terry Mills
Leader of the Opposition

Move to censure Chief Minister for failing to condemn Latham's attack on Territory funding

5 October 2004

The Chief Minister deserved to be censured in Parliament today for failing to have the spine and leadership to condemn an attack by Labor Leader Mark Latham on the level of funding the Territory gets from the Federal Government, CLP Leader Terry Mills said.

Mr Mills said Chief Minister Clare Martin should have shown the same backbone as Tasmanian Labor Premier Paul Lennon who stood up for Tasmanian workers and the threat presented to them by Mark Latham.

“The publicly stated position of Federal Labor Leader Mark Latham is this:

…it is absurd to suggest, as the Grants Commission does every year that the community needs in Hobart and Darwin are two to seven times greater than those in Campbelltown and Blacktown.”

“Mark Latham's clear inference is that Territorians receive more than their fair share of funding from the Federal Government and the Chief Minister should have had the courage to condemn Mark Latham for his comments,” Mr Mills said.

“Grants Commission funding is used to deliver basic public services at the same levels as other Australian States.

“Given Mark Latham's belief that the current Grants Commission funding decisions results in the Northern Territory in getting more than its fair share of Commonwealth revenue the Martin Government would either have to increase taxes or reduce services if its funding levels were cut.

“Federal Labor Leader Mark Latham is mouthing the same words as Labor Premiers Bob Carr and Steve Bracks when he questions the formula under which the Territory receives its Federal funding. The large States of NSW and Victoria ran a national campaign to have funds taken away from the Territory and Mark Latham clearly agrees with their sentiments.

“Mark Latham says the Territory's federal funding should be cut. If it is the Martin Government will have to increase taxes and make cuts forcing businesses to lay off staff and put more Territorians out of work.
“Mr Latham's attack on the Territory stands as is and his position remains unchanged. It is a serious threat to the Territory and the funding support we would receive from the Federal Government under Mark Latham's leadership,” Mr Mills said

*Attached CLP Censure motion

I move that so much of standing orders be suspended to move the following motion of censure:

That this House censures the Chief Minister and her Labor Government for:

(1) Failing to stand up for the Territory and show leadership by condemning the Federal Labor Leader Mark Latham for his position that…” it is absurd to suggest, as the Grants Commission does every year, that community needs in Hobart and Darwin are two to seven times greater than those in Campbelltown and Blacktown. With limited government resources, funding formulas must be prepared, on the basis of need between regions, to take away as well as give.”

(2) Their public support for the dangerous position and policies of federal Labor Leader Mark Latham which would:

• result in a reduction in Commonwealth funding to the Northern Territory in favour of the rich southern States of New South Wales and Victoria.

• and which in turn would result in tax increases for struggling Territory families and a reduction in services to Territorians.

(3) And condemns the Northern Territory Government for failing to take a stand against the impact of proposed Industrial Relations policies under a Latham Labor Government on struggling Territory businesses and the mining Industry

Terry Mills

Ends