TAX CUTS WELCOME BUT BUDGET FAILS THE TERRITORY TEST

Treasurer Syd Stirling has welcomed the tax cuts and one off support for families in this year’s Federal Budget but believes that it fails to address the short and long term development needs of the Territory.

“This is a budget that fails the “Territory” test,” said Mr Stirling.

“It is a Budget the Federal Government hopes will get them re-elected, but at time of a strong national economy resulting from the resources boom, Territorians had the right to expect more.

“There should have been more support for vital infrastructure, better targeted programs that respond to our particular needs, especially in education and health, and investment in our long term future.

“While I welcome the overall investment in child care, the Territory needs additional places particularly for 0-2 year olds. This Budget does not provide for those places, leaving waiting lists as long as ever.

“The additional investment in higher education is also welcomed, though no real details are available for what this will mean for the Charles Darwin University and institutions such as the Batchelor Institute. These smaller regional institutions do have higher costs and this has not been recognised in this Budget.

“The $5 billion endowment will provide some long term growth funding for capital works and research.

“Indigenous education could benefit from programs to support the establishment of hostels and boarding facilities but once again detail is scant and I am hopeful that this will not be tied up in the red tape of other proposals.

“Overall early childhood, primary and secondary education has not been boosted when it should be at a time when the nations schools and education system does need more support.

“The training payment is welcome.”

Mr Stirling said he also welcomed the $5.3 million investment at the Menzies School of Health research and the $14 million establishment of Baker Heart facilities.

“I am disappointed in the failure of the Federal Government to take up the strong plan we have proposed for Tiger Brennan Drive. Despite having constant discussions with the Federal Government they are demanding more information before anything will be done. This is just weasel words.
"Overall no specifics have been provided for the rest of the road projects so we will wait until further details come forth," Mr Stirling said.

"The Federal Government has missed the opportunity to provide real long term support for environmental programs and to tackle climate change. Climate change will affect the Territory's future.

"Overall while the Budget does provide support through tax cuts and one off payments it ignores the specific long term needs of the Territory. Territorians will see this budget more as an election grab than a real budget for our future."

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