SHOT WITH HIS OWN GUN

The release of the Report on Government Services has exposed the failure of the Chief Minister to deal with the issue he considers the most important to face the Territory.

Yesterday, on ABC radio, the Chief Minister claimed the most pressing issue facing the Territory is the skills shortage.

“If you talk to every single business person in the Northern Territory, you talk to Territory Government, chief executive officers, the lack of skills and the lack of people to deliver on projects in the Northern Territory is the very single biggest issue that our economy faces.”

Today the Report on Government Services shows that between 2002 and 2006 annual Territory Government expenditure on Vocational Education and Training dropped from $88 million to $82 million.

“No wonder the Chief Minister believes the skills shortage is the most pressing issue facing the Territory – he was instrumental in helping create it as Minister for Employment, Education and Training!,” says Terry Mills, Leader of the Opposition.

“I guess the Chief Minister is feeling guilty about his negligence, as he should about presiding over the largest drop in skills training funding in the country.

“The Chief Minister’s failure to address what he considers the most pressing issue facing the Territory is all made all the more staggering by the revenue bonanza enjoyed by Territory Labor.

“To cut government expenditure on vocational education and training by 7% during a period of record government revenue amounts to economic sabotage.

“Every Territorian is now paying the price of Paul Henderson’s abject failure to increase funding for skills training.

“The skills shortage created by Territory Labor has fed the high cost of living in the Territory at all levels of the economy.

“Businesses are obviously hamstrung by a lack of skilled workers but so are ordinary consumers.

“Get the car fixed – pay more; have a meal out – pay more; unblock the drain – pay more; install an air conditioner – pay more.”

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594