DOING THE JOB ON UNEMPLOYMENT

“The Northern Territory’s 5.3% unemployment rate is the highest on mainland Australia and heading in the wrong direction,” says Terry Mills, Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Unemployment in the Territory has risen from 3% at the start of 2007 to 5.3%.

“Given we have had a period sustained economic expansion it is worrying that more and more Territorians are falling out of work,” says Mr Mills.

“The problem is not a lack of demand for labour - the October ANZ job figures showed job advertisements in the Territory increased by 8.2% in the year to September - the growth in unemployment reflects the shortage of skilled workers in the Territory.

“The real problem is that the Labor Government has failed to match job training programs with the skills shortages that plague the Territory.

“Skills are developed through training programs and clearly Territory Labor has not succeeded in creating an adequate skills base in the NT.

“Anyone trying the get a plumber, an electrician, or a carpenter will know the Labor Government is failing to match demand and supply in the Territory's job market.

“Effective policies developed at the State and Territory Government level can and do have an impact upon the various rates of unemployment experienced throughout the Federation.

“As economic opportunity is lost we are left with the cost of managing unemployment and its attendant social cost.

“When last year’s January figures were released the then Treasurer, Syd Stirling, issued a media release claiming credit for the figures due to – ‘sound financial management’ that saw the Territory ‘bucking the national trend’ and ‘registering a record low in unemployment’.

“He also claimed ‘there is a clear trend’ to lower unemployment.

“We now know those words were nothing more than wishful thinking on behalf of the former Treasurer.

“The question is, what is the current Treasurer planning to do to cut the rate of unemployment in the Territory?

Further comment : Terry Mills 0418 833 594