4th April 2008

Labor Immune to Renters’ Pain

The spiralling cost of rent in Darwin is hurting Territory families and will hamper future economic growth, says Terry Mills, Leader of the Opposition.

In the latest survey by Australian Property Managers Darwin is now the most expensive city to rent a house with median rents increasing by 11% to $420 a week.

“$420 a week is a staggering amount of money for young families to pay to give their kids a backyard to play in,” says Terry Mills, Leader of the Opposition.

“Not surprisingly I’m coming across more tales of housing stressing the community.

“Just yesterday I spoke with a Palmerston resident who after 20 years in the city is facing homelessness. This elderly lady will wait for up to 33 months for a single bedroom unit through Territory Housing. Though she is desperately trying to find alternative accommodation she cannot find a place to rent as competition for limited private rental accommodation is so fierce. In the meantime she sleeps on the floor of her daughter’s small unit.

“Territory Labor must shoulder a significant amount of blame for the exorbitant price of buying a home or renting a home in Darwin.

“The Territory Government’s refusal to release sufficient amounts of land for residential development has driven up the cost of buying and renting a home in Darwin.

“The impact is particularly severe for those families desperately trying to save a deposit to get into their first home.

“People saving for their first home face the double whammy of more and more of their income is being sucked away by increasing rents at the very moment house prices are going through the roof.

“Little wonder many people are abandoning the dream of owning a home in Darwin. The impact of such expensive housing in Darwin will be felt for many years to come.

“Young families will be drawn to communities where they can afford to buy a home.

“For the Territory to have a prosperous future it’s critical that young families put down their roots and that means buying a home.”

To arrange further comment : Greg Charter 04000 14059

Media Contact: Greg Charter - Email: greg.charter@nt.gov.au - Ph: 08 8901 4104 (m) 0400 014 059