11th April 2008

PLANNING NATTED AGAIN

The Fisheries Minister, Chris Natt, needs to fess up as to why the cost of constructing a boat ramp at East Arm has jumped from $2.8 million to $4.6 million within a year and why the project is way behind schedule.

“Almost a year ago Minister Natt issued a media release detailing the benefits a $2.8 million ramp at East Arm would bring when completed in February 2008,” says Terry Mills, Leader of the Opposition.

“Today the Minister has announced the boat ramp will cost an extra $1.8 million and won’t be completed until ‘late October’ at the earliest.

“This isn’t the Alice to Darwin rail line – it’s a boat ramp.

“This Minister would have trouble successfully planning and budgeting for a sausage sizzle.

“Once again we see evidence of a lazy, inefficient Government that constantly underestimates the cost of projects and fails to deliver on time.

“The extension of Tiger Brennan Drive is a case in point.

“When the extension of Tiger Brennan was first announced by Territory Labor in 2003-04, it was budgeted to cost $27.3 million, now to cost will be $110 million – at least.

“Millions of dollars of taxpayers’ money will be wasted because Territory Labor dithered about getting the project started.

“The long promised, much needed, Oncology Unit at Royal Darwin Hospital gets more expensive with each year that passes.

“Consider this budget balls up alongside Labor’s decision to close down after hours bulk billing at the Farrar Health Clinic to save just $300,000 a year.

“Budgeting is a skill this Labor Government has not managed to acquire in 7 years of office – it’s time it did.

“The Minister’ abject failure to deliver this project on-time and within budget is only matched by his failure to explain why he hasn’t delivered.

“The Labor Government needs a collective dose of honesty, not eternal evasion.”

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