Terry Mills
Leader of the Opposition

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DELIA’S FISCAL FANTASIES

The Treasurer, Delia Lawrie, is a serial abuser of policy costings for political advantage, says the Territory Opposition.

“When it’s a Government project the Treasurer invariably underestimates the cost of delivering, when it’s an Opposition policy the Treasurer wildly inflates the estimated cost,” says Terry Mills, Leader of the Opposition.

“Tiger Brennan Drive is a case in point. The project was first costed at $27 million by the Labor Government; at last count at least $110 million will be required to deliver on Labor’s 2001 promise.

“On the flip side the Treasurer’s claim the CLP’s ‘policy’ to build a prison in Katherine would cost $70 million; pure fantasy.

“The first point is the CLP has not announced a policy to build a prison in Katherine. Rather, the Member for Katherine encouraged the Government to build a prison in Katherine when it was deciding where to locate a new prison. In doing so Mrs Miller echoed the Member for Barkly’s call for a prison to be built in Tennant Creek. On the Treasurer’s logic the Government is now committed to building a prison in Tennant Creek and Darwin.

“The second point is the Treasurer’s $70 million costing is based on no plans, no capacity numbers, no type of prison; it is a figure is plucked from thin air.

“The Treasurer’s speculative cost of a new hospital for Katherine is equally without foundation. When the Member for Katherine was asked by her local paper what she would like to see for the town she nominated moving the hospital above the flood line but ‘we’d have to budget for years before you could do it’. So there is no commitment to an unfunded hospital

“The Treasurer also states the CLP’s policy to increase teachers pay would cost $50 million over 3 years. This fails to take into account the $30 million cost of the Government’s current offer. Is the Treasurer claiming the Government’s offer to teachers is not funded?

“Finally the Treasurer claims running a transport corridor, power and water to Glyde Point will cost $500 million; that’s vastly inflated. Further Glyde Point was the Government’s nominated site for industrial development until last year. If Glyde Point isn’t viable why was it Government policy to develop there for so long?
“This litany of deceptions is indicative of how little regard this Government has for the facts.”

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