The Henderson Government must take up the fight to the Rudd Government over the planned closure of Darwin’s National Archives of Australia facility in Millner.

Shadow Minister for Arts and Museums Ross Bohlin said the Commonwealth’s proposed closure of the Archive – and its intention to shift archived material to either Canberra or Melbourne – significantly undermines the capacity of Territorians to access our history.

“There’s more than a century’s worth of Territory history at the National Archives of Australia and it’s imperative that it remains in Darwin,” Mr Bohlin said.

“The Archive is widely used by genealogists, historians, academics and ordinary Territorians with a thirst for knowledge on our past.

“I understand it contains documents and images dating back to the very early days of European settlement, records pertaining to the Stolen Generation, cemetery records and official papers before and after Self Government.

“There is no good reason why the Commonwealth plans to close this facility. It’s a cost-cutting exercise that ignores the interests of Territorians and it should be reversed.”

The Archive is due to close when the building’s lease expires in September 2010.

Mr Bohlin said it would take years for the historic documents at the facility to be digitally archived.

“The closure amounts to an attack on Territory jobs and the rights of Territorians to freely access and research our history,” he said.

“The Government’s recently returned the senior position at Parks Australia North to Canberra without explanation.

“The community should sign the petition that’s circulating against the Archive’s closure and lobby the Member for Solomon, Damian Hale and Senator Trish Crossin to tell the Federal Labor Government to leave our Archive alone.”

Further comment: Ross Bohlin 0413 339 417