Budget Overview

Budget 2009 - Protecting Territory Jobs - Building the Territory

The Northern Territory Government is delivering an unprecedented $1.3 billion infrastructure spend that will support 2500 jobs across the economy.

Treasurer Delia Lawrie today said Budget 2009 also protects jobs by maintaining the Territory’s position as the lowest taxing jurisdiction for small and medium businesses.

“Protecting Territory jobs and building the Territory is at the core of Budget 2009,” Ms Lawrie said.

“Budget 2009 will invest a record $1.3 billion in a construction program that will make a difference in the lives of many Territorians.

“We will also protect Territory jobs and businesses against a backdrop of the global economic downturn by not raising or introducing new taxes.

“The construction industry underpins our economy and that’s why the Henderson Government will boost the construction program by $414 million – or 47 per cent more than last year - to deliver more Territory roads, schools, houses and other vital infrastructure.

“Budget 2009 delivers a record $1.3 billion infrastructure program – bringing the total investment in construction projects by the Territory Government since 2001 to $5.6 billion – and creates 2500 jobs across the economy.”

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Labor Government’s $1.3 billion infrastructure program includes major roads and schools upgrades, as well as headworks for land release and new facilities:

- $322 million infrastructure investment for Territory roads and national highways;
- $331.5 million to improve power, water and sewerage services in 2009-10 – as part of a $1.4 billion five year program;
- $390.3 million for housing projects;
- $118.9 million for new education infrastructure projects;
- $30.4 million for prison and police facilities;
- $23.25 million to fund community infrastructure to support the great Territory lifestyle;
- $22.2 million for health upgrades and improvements; and
- $20 million for headworks at Palmerston East suburbs.
The Territory and Commonwealth Government’s jointly funded Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program will deliver $176.7 million in housing projects in 2009-10 in remote areas.

PROTECTING JOBS

The Henderson Government is delivering a record $1.3 billion infrastructure spend, no new taxes and no cuts to services as part of Budget 2009, to protect Territory jobs and build the Territory so that economic benefits flow through the economy.

Budget 2009 invests $5.13 million in skilling the workforce under the four year, $21.3 million Jobs Plan 3 to support 10,000 new apprentices and trainees getting jobs in the Territory.

Employers will continue to be supported to take on additional apprentices and trainees for equipment to support their training.

A new workforce growth unit will be established to focus on attracting workers to the Territory, building on the $500,000 Regional Jobs Hub in Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek.

NO NEW TAXES

No new taxes and no cuts to frontline services are a key component of Budget 2009

Budget 2009 will result in the Northern Territory remaining the jurisdiction with the lowest taxes for businesses with up to 100 employees.

“Labor Government policies have resulted in cumulative tax savings for businesses of $202 million since 2001,” Ms Lawrie said.

“The payroll tax threshold will remain at $1.25 million for businesses with up to 100 staff and these businesses will pay no land tax or fire and emergency services levies.

“Businesses in the Territory enjoy the second highest payroll tax-free threshold at $1.25 million, pay no land tax and pay no fire and emergency services levies.

“The payroll tax rate was reduced from 6.2% to 5.9% in 2008, saving Territory business $7.2 million per year and the Territory Government will cut the rate to 5.5% by 2012.

“For businesses with wage costs up to $5 million the Territory has the most competitive payroll tax scheme in Australia.

“Further payroll tax harmonisation measures will reduce red tape and improve business efficiency.”

Budget 2009 will also adjust the value of penalty units for offences that attract fines to ensure they keep up with inflation.
TOURISM

Budget 2009 provides $9.3 million over two years for the Tourism Stimulus Response Package to assist local tourism businesses during the global downturn, including:

- $2.2 million for re-focused advertising targeting domestic travel to the Territory and promoting Darwin as the gateway to Asia;
- $400,000 specialist advice to assist operators improve their business;
- $120,000 under the Going Green program to assist businesses to implement green initiatives; and
- $90,000 in subsidies to support tourism accreditation.

The Territory remains a favoured travel destination among tourists and backpackers in particular.

The backpacker market grew by 7% last year with 92,000 backpackers coming to the Territory.

HOUSING

Budget 2009 delivers major investments in housing across the Territory including:

- $98.16 million for the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program;
- $78.5 million to refurbish 730 existing homes; and
- $23.4 million for new and upgraded public housing including $10 million for the 44-unit Bellamack Seniors Village.

RESIDENTIAL AND INDUSTRIAL LAND

The Territory Government continues to fast track land release to meet the needs of our growing population.

$20 million will be provided for headworks at Palmerston East suburbs.

Under a $28 million development, the Territory Government will provide:

- $6 million to expand Darwin Business Park with an additional 11 industrial lots; and
- $2.5 million for hardstand and surface drainage works at the Common User Area, located at East Arm.

Planning for the new city of Weddell has begun and will provide around 10,000 additional blocks of land for Territorians from 2014 onwards.
CORE SERVICES

The Henderson Government will deliver more core services in Budget 2009 by:

- Employing 17 more doctors, an increase of 184 since 2001;
- Employing 95 more nurses, an increase of 578 since 2001;
- Employing 54 more police, an increase of 339 since 2001;
- Employing 80 more teachers, an increase of 380 since 2001; and
- Employing 20 more firefighters in Darwin and Alice Springs.

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