Budget 2009 Protecting Jobs and Building Darwin and the Northern Suburbs

Budget 2009 will deliver for families in Darwin and the northern suburbs by protecting jobs, building vital infrastructure and boosting investment in core services.

Treasurer Delia Lawrie said Budget 2009 delivers an unprecedented $1.3 billion infrastructure investment, a record $1.05 billion health budget and invests more in teachers, police and training.

“Record infrastructure funding protects jobs and helps build the Territory,” Ms Lawrie said.

“This means more jobs for Territory families and even more construction activity in Darwin and the northern suburbs.

“Core services are also boosted to improve health, education and police to protect Territory jobs.”

INFRASTRUCTURE

Budget 2009 delivers a record $1.3 billion infrastructure investment, bringing the total investment in infrastructure by the Henderson Government since 2001 to $5.6 billion.

Some infrastructure highlights for Darwin and the northern suburbs include:

- $21.84 million for the Primary Schools of the 21st Century initiative – for new works of up to $3 million for each primary and special school;
- $15.13 million to continue the Darwin Waterfront development;
- $10.25 million for Tiger Brennan Drive – passing lanes and duplication;
- $6 million for Royal Darwin Hospital staff accommodation;
- $6 million to commence Myilly Point parkland;
- $4.75 million for Hidden Valley – infrastructure upgrade and drag strip;
- $3 million for new science facilities at Dripstone Middle School; and
- $2 million for accommodation for cancer patients and their carers.
SUPPORTING BUSINESS

Some Budget 2009 highlights include:

- $1 million for the Territory Business Centre to assist businesses with advice and information; and
- $690,000 to Tourism Top End for visitor information services in Darwin and marketing and industry enhancement activities for Darwin, Kakadu and Arnhem Land.

HOUSING THE TERRITORY

More people are calling the Territory home and that’s why Budget 2009 is focused on Housing the Territory through more land to grow, new affordable places to buy and rent, and new social housing.

Treasurer Delia Lawrie today said Budget 2009 delivers $390.3 million for housing – a $187.4 million or 92 per boost on the previous year.

“The Territory’s population growth is leading the nation, which is why Budget 2009 is focused on more land release, new affordable places to buy and rent and new public housing,” Ms Lawrie said.

“These housing projects will create 355 jobs across the construction sector.

“Population growth is a key driver of our economy - the release of more land and measures making it easier for Territorians to own their first home will help build the Territory and protect Territory jobs.”

Budget 2009 delivers affordable housing initiatives including a new home purchase assistance scheme, ‘Homestart NT’, to assist more Territory families to buy their own home.

The scheme is directly targeted to the affordable housing market so that low and medium income earners can access around 40% of the housing market in their regions using no more than 30% of their income.

Homestart NT lifts the price cap in Darwin from $350,000 to $420,000, a $70,000 increase.

The Government will establish an Affordable Housing Rental Company to help meet the need for quality, affordable rental properties for low and medium income Territorians.

Further housing initiatives in 2009 include:

- The first Home Owner Grant which provides $7000 to Territorians purchasing or building their first home;
- The first Home Owner Concession which saves Territorians purchasing their first home up to $15,515 on stamp duty; and
- $28 million under the Homestart NT scheme to assist Territorians on low to middle incomes to secure a loan to purchase property.
SAFER COMMUNITIES

Budget 2009 delivers a record $279 million in police, fire and emergency services as part of Budget 2009 to make our streets safer, a 104% increase in spending since 2001.

This includes $174.2 million for police, fire and emergency services, covering:

- Eleven more firefighters for Darwin;
- Further rollout of the Safer Streets initiative and police beats;
- $7.26 million to expand and upgrade the police digital radio network; and
- $3.35 million for closed circuit television systems in the greater Darwin area.

BETTER SCHOOLING AND TRAINING

The Northern Territory Government will invest a record $808 million in education and training as part of Budget 2009, up 70% since 2001.

In Darwin and the northern suburbs this includes:

- $67.97 million for primary and early childhood education in 19 schools;
- $55.78 million to assist non-government schools in the region;
- $34.63 million for senior years education in four senior secondary schools;
- $27.21 million for middle years education at six schools;
- $18.29 million for Commonwealth funding for schools including National Schools Specific Purpose payments; and
- $17.68 million for Charles Darwin University, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education and other service providers to deliver vocational education and training.

BETTER HEALTH

Ms Lawrie said the Henderson Government will invest a record $1.05 billion for health and families in Budget 2009 – doubling the health budget since 2001.

In Darwin and the northern suburbs this includes:

- $2 million for short-term accommodation for cancer patients and their carers; and
- $1.5 million for a dental blitz to provide an additional 4000 dental appointments.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, LIFESTYLE AND ENVIRONMENT

Budget 2009 continues investments to support community development and enhance the great Territory lifestyle.

Some community development and lifestyle highlights include:

- $11.2 million for home ownership schemes to assist low to middle income earners to purchase a home;
• $7.13 million for art, cultural and history collections at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory;
• $2.4 million for Leanyer Recreation Park; and
• $1.54 million for the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens.

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