Delia Lawrie
TREASURER

12 May 2009

Federal Budget is Good News for Territory Port, Jobs and Health

Treasurer Delia Lawrie tonight welcomed the Rudd Government’s Budget focus on protecting jobs, massive national infrastructure spending and delivering new community, health and education facilities for Territory families.

“The Rudd Government’s Federal Budget supports the Territory Government’s decision to protect jobs in the face of the global financial crisis,” Ms Lawrie said.

“The Federal Government will invest heavily in infrastructure and services throughout the Territory complementing last week’s Territory Budget’s focus.

“The Budget includes $50 million in funding to improve Darwin Port, which is welcome and will add to the Territory Government’s $100 million commitment to Port improvement.

“This will allow a significant expansion of the Port’s capacity – including new berthing and ship loading facilities.”

Ms Lawrie strongly welcomed the Rudd Government’s focus on improving Northern Territory health outcomes.

“Despite the expected collapse in GST revenue due to the global economic downturn, the Federal Government has met its health commitments to Territorians,” Ms Lawrie said.

“For too long the previous Coalition Government neglected the Territory’s health needs - tonight’s Federal Budget helps the Territory Government in its work to improve Territorians’ health.

“I welcome the Rudd Government’s $34 million investment in the Menzies School of Health Research, as it is the only Australian health and medical research institute with a primary focus on the health of people living in tropical areas.

“Just as important is the $28 million for a new medical school that will provide junior doctors with expert medical training. This investment will deliver more home-grown doctors who will stay in the Territory to deliver important medical services.

“Territorians will also benefit from an $18.6 million for investment to deliver a 50-unit accommodation complex to cater for short term accommodation for patients travelling long distances and to reduce bed block.

“$13.6 million has also been invested in the Alice Springs Hospital Emergency Department- a great decision for the Centre.”
Ms Lawrie said the $191 million over four years, including $102 million this financial year allocated for education infrastructure will provide Territory children with great new facilities, provide our teachers with a better working environment, and keep the work for our local construction sector.

“I am particularly pleased with funding of $30.7 million for the Australian Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Education.

“Another key component of tonight’s budget is the delivery in the Budget of more than $807 million over three years to help Close the Gap of Indigenous disadvantage.”

This includes:

- $156 million for remote policing and substance abuse measures;
- $131 million to continue the commitment for increased primary health care.
- $80 million for community law and justice.
- $45 million for literacy;
- $11 million for an additional 22 teachers housing;

“We welcome social housing funding delivered through the Budget through the Strategic Indigenous Housing Infrastructure Program (SIHIP) that will invest $98.2 million to build up to 100 houses, upgrade existing houses and for land servicing this financial year.

“The ongoing delivery of tax cuts and the $32.49 weekly increase for single pensioners will also make life easier for Territorians doing it tough.

“The Territory Government has committed to ensuring this increase doesn't lead to any rent rises for pensioners in Territory Housing.”

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