Media Release

TALKING TOUGH ON TRUANCY

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The Territory Opposition is demanding immediate legal action regarding the thousands of children of school age in the Territory who are not enrolled in school. Today the Chief Minister has talked up his Every Child, Every Day strategy and stated fines will be ‘introduced’ for families that fail to send their children to school. “The fact is penalties for non-attendance of school pre-date the Labor Government but not a single parent has ever been convicted,” says John Elferink, Manager of Opposition Business. “Despite an entrenched culture of truancy in the Territory the Labor Government has failed to punish a single parent during a decade in power. “As a consequence mobs of young Territorians are illiterate, unemployed and virtually unemployable. “We must not lose another generation of young Territorians to the despair of illiteracy and welfare dependence. “Last year there were approximately 2000 Territory children of school age who were not enrolled in school. It is those parents who should be the first target of the Government; there is no excuse for not enrolling a child in school. “Sending children to school is a legal obligation that needs to be enforced if the Territory is going to break connection between high levels of illiteracy, rising crime and overflowing prisons. “Unfortunately the Henderson Government has a history failure when dealing with recalcitrant families. “The failure to enforce Parental Responsibility Orders is symptomatic of a Government that fails to deliver on its tough talk.”

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