The Property Council’s ‘My City’ survey has confirmed the findings of last year’s My Schools report that poor education outcomes are part of a Territory-wide crisis and not, as the Henderson Government claims, limited to remote and community schools.

Deputy Opposition Leader, Kezia Purick, said only 57% of Darwin residents surveyed believe the city has ‘good schools and other education facilities’ – a view that reinforces the Henderson Government’s failure to grow our education system over the past 10 years.

“The fault doesn’t lie with the teachers, students or school councils – it rests squarely with the Henderson Labor Government,” Ms Purick said.

“After a decade of neglect by Labor, the Territory’s education system requires a fresh approach and a new direction to re-invigorate public confidence.

“The Country Liberals have committed to spending an additional $27 million a year to improve education outcomes.

“We have laid out real targets, including a 4% improvement in reading and writing results in the first year of Government and a 15% improvement in NAPLAN outcomes in the first term after a Country Liberals election win.

“Literacy and numeracy diagnostic assessments will be introduced for all Year 1 pupils in an effort to ensure struggling students don’t fall too far behind their peers during the crucial early school years.

“Under the Country Liberals $10.5 million a year will be spent ensuring every primary classroom from Year 2 upwards has a classroom tutor offering three-hours a day of one-on-one literacy and numeracy assistance to students in need of additional support.

“As well, the Country Liberals will recruit 20 specialist child mental health workers to work with pupils with behavioural issues.

“Additionally, extra funding will go to school councils to fund after-school literacy and numeracy programs and to COGSO.

“By contrast, the Henderson Government has committed a miserly $700,000 to establish a taskforce to boost education outcomes.

“On its own, another committee will do nothing to improve the Territory’s education system – but for a Government that’s bereft of ideas and energy, it’s better than trying to implement real change.

“Education in the Territory needs real reform – in Darwin and in the bush.

Further comment: Kezia Purick 0407 035 976