COUNTRY LIBERALS

MEDIA RELEASE

VALÉ GUS WILLIAMS

Terry Mills MLA

Date 14th September 2010

The death of senior Arante man Gus Williams is a sad loss for the Hermannsburg community and the Northern Territory.

Opposition Leader Terry Mills paid tribute to Mr Williams and his extensive contribution to the Territory’s cultural and community life.

"Mr Williams was a role model for his family, friends and generations of children growing up in Hermannsburg," Mr Mills said.

"Through his music and his actions, he helped forge a path that others followed over many years.

"While he will rightly be best remembered for his music, the manner in which he led the Hermannsburg community should also not be forgotten.

"He played a significant role in the Palm Valley land claim and was a long time councillor and President of the Hermannsburg Council.

Mr Mills said the story of Mr Williams’ musical journey – from Hermannsburg choir member to country music pioneer – is full of byways and directional changes.

"He had no formal musical schooling, but through practice and listening to records mastered the guitar and began the switch from gospel to country," Mr Mills said.

"He was responsible for organising the first Northern Territory Aboriginal Country Music Festival in the late 1970s, recorded a number of albums and introduced live music to many Aboriginal communities.

"His efforts were acknowledged with the award of an Order of Australia in 1983 and induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2000.

"It's appropriate Mr Williams’ life will be honoured with a State Funeral.

"My thoughts are with Mr Williams’ family and friends at this sad time."

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594