MEDIA RELEASE

LABOR MUST RELEASE INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT

January 01st, 2012

The impact of the Stuart Highway closure and railway derailment is still being felt across the Territory, almost a week after flooding caused by the aftermath of Cyclone Grant.

Shadow Transport Spokesman, Adam Giles, says reports of fruit and vegetable shortages in some Top End supermarkets and of businesses struggling to get stock and supplies highlights the importance of securing the link between southern Australia and the Territory.

He called on the Territory Government to work with the Country Liberals to push the Commonwealth for a long-term plan to flood proof the Top End.

“Back in April 2008, the Government commissioned consultants Acil Tasman to develop a 10-year year infrastructure plan for the Territory but nearly four years later, the document still hasn’t seen the light of day.” Mr Giles said.

“In addition, its flakey 2030 plan makes reference to roads infrastructure, but that’s about where it appears to end.

“It’s ridiculous that almost every year, one of the biggest cities in northern Australia is cut off by the weather.

“It hurts members of the public who want to buy fruit, veggies and other groceries for the family and business operators waiting to fill customer orders and update stock.

“The Territory’s economic growth will continue to be hamstrung as long as the existing supply lines are so brittle.

“Weather-proofing the Territory will take many years and cost billions of dollars, but in the long term the investment will be critical to our long term expansion.

“The nation’s future prosperity lies in the development of sustainable economies in northern Australia on the back of the resources sector and growth in the pastoral industry, but this will be seriously set back if the Stuart Highway breaks-up every time there is a serious weather event.

“The Government’s sluggish approach to this essential development is hurting the Territory.”

Further comment: Adam Giles 0421 588 118