M E D I A  R E L E A S E
TACKLING THE CHURN

February 28th, 2012

Opposition Leader, Terry Mills, says the high churn rate in remote Territory schools needs on-going Government attention in the interests of maintaining curriculum continuity and raising the bar on student outcomes.

Mr Mills said figures obtained by the Country Liberals show that in 2010, 41.8% of teachers who began the year in a remote Territory school were not at the same school at the end of the year.

This was a considerable increase on the previous year when 33% of remote school teachers failed to finish the year at the school they began the teaching year.

This is in contrast to figures quoted by Education Minister Chris Burns, who has cherry-picked retention rates from the first and second terms of the school year, thereby avoiding analysis of retention rates for the entire school year.

"Clearly the high churn levels will have a negative impact on the quality of education provided to students who attend those schools," Mr Mills said.

"It is my experience that continuity of teaching staff is a key to getting the best outcomes from students, particularly those where English might be their second or third language.

“In the interests of students and teachers, it is important that teacher training includes greater emphasis on remote service requirements and challenges and that Government beefs up specific orientation programs to prepare interstate and local teachers for their remote teaching experience.

“I applaud the work of all the Territory teachers and understand the additional pressures placed on teachers who choose to work in remote schools.

“The Country Liberals will work with teachers, school councils and broader school communities to ensure students are given the best possible opportunity to reach their full potential.” (See attached link)

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594