Media Release

CENTRE CLOSURE WILL HURT FAMILIES

Terry Mills MLA

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The decision to close Gray Early Learning Centre at the end of the year will affect many Palmerston families and further highlights the critical shortage of child care centres in the Northern Territory.

Opposition Leader Terry Mills said families were notified yesterday of the proposed closure, which takes effect from December 22nd.

“I understand about 60 children attend the Gray centre, and the closure is a cruel blow for parents who will now have to make alternative care arrangements,” Mr Mills said.

“Given the extensive waiting lists at child care centres around Palmerston, finding an alternative will be a major headache.

“The Gray centre was operated by ABC until that company went broke in 2009.

“Since then, Mission Australia has run the Gray facility but they have been unable to make it a viable operation.

“Suggestions by Mission Australia that parents send their children to a new centre in Wulagi are of little use to families living in Palmerston.

“The Gray centre’s closure re-enforces the absurdity of the empty child care centre built as part of the Federal Government’s Palmerston Super Clinic construction.

“This centre has been empty for more than a year, despite the critical shortage of child care places.

“According to Education Department documents, the Territory Government anticipated signing an operating agreement with a child care provider in July.

“Its failure to do so – and now the proposed closure at Gray – is a double hit for families.”

* Letter attached

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594