Chief Minister Paul Henderson and Treasurer Delia Lawrie must answer a series of crucial questions relating to the state of the Northern Territory budget and enormous levels of debt.

Opposition Leader, Terry Mills, used his Budget in Reply speech in Parliament today to highlight the Labor Government’s economic irresponsibility and dependence on debt to sustain their administration.

“I have tabled 27 questions for the Chief Minister and Treasurer to answer covering six main areas of the Territory’s books, Mr Mills said.

“I want Labor to respond to issues concerning:

• The Budget black hole
• Treasury Corporation Borrowings
• Off-Budget funding
• Funding the prison project
• Funding the Waterfront project
• Power and Water Corporation

“Labor’s mismanagement of the budget will leave Territorians burdened by debt for decades to come,” Mr Mills said.

“The Government has glossed over the disastrous state of the Territory’s Budget – but Territorians will have to repay this year’s half-a-billion dollar deficit and the projected $2.7 billion net debt blow-out.

“During the first term of a Country Liberals Government we will set a target for
a return to a balanced Budget.

"Today I have released a series of questions that drill into the Government's oversight of the Territory Budget and its mismanagement of major projects.

"I have started by seeking from Government confirmation that the 2012-13 Budget will leave the Territory with a $767 million fiscal deficit, increase net debt by $729 million and includes additional borrowings of $783 million.

"By 2016 the Territory Government won't even generate enough own-source income to match the interest repayments on our debt.

I have also asked serious questions about the true impact of the Darwin prison project on the budget bottom line, the cost of getting out of the prison deal and the affect of interest repayments on the overall economy."

Mr Mills used his Budget in Reply speech to highlight the Country Liberals priorities if elected to Government.

"We will start by keeping people safe; cleaning up our streets and parks; driving down the cost of living for families; increasing the supply of affordable housing; providing a well-managed economy; boosting infrastructure and protecting our unique lifestyle.

"The Government has an obligation to respond to the questions we have asked on behalf of Territorians in the interests of better understanding the books and drawing a road-map into the future.

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594