Our Manifesto
The right track to a quality lifestyle for ALL Territorians

www.countryliberals.org.au
Territorians have had enough. We are fed up with Labor’s nanny state.

Chief Minister Henderson how about telling that to your Labor Party boss Julia Gillard, and her boss Greens Senator, Bob Brown. Stop telling us how to live our lives and treating us like children! You are suffocating us. Labor is a Government that forces itself into every aspect of our lives.

The Territory was once a place that drew you in and called you back. Where you could raise your kids and give them an opportunity and experience like nowhere else. It was a place that never felt the need to imitate the rest of Australia. We never had speed limits on our open roads – and we didn’t have them for a reason.

The Northern Territory was a place where people came for a month and stayed for a lifetime.

Now we are tired of feeling unsafe on our streets and in our homes.

» Mr Henderson we don’t want your Labor/Greens carbon tax.

» We want the Territory’s massive debt brought under control so that money can be spent on health and education and to relieve the cost of living pressures that are destroying families and businesses.

» We don’t want to be told where we can and can’t fish.

» We don’t want to see hard-working Territorians lose their jobs because the Greens have traded off live cattle exports as the price of supporting Ms Gillard’s illegitimate government.

» And we don’t want Territory businesses smothered with your bureaucratic red tape.

We can do better.
Our community is crying out for help. Territory families want safer communities, good jobs, affordable housing, attractive neighborhoods and health and education delivered fairly and evenly.

But make no mistake; a Country Liberals Government united behind leader Terry Mills will put public safety first!

All Territorians – including those in Alice Springs, Tennant Creek and Katherine – expect to be able to live safely, decently and without fear.

Two thirds of our prisoners are repeat offenders and Labor’s answer is to build a bigger prison costing half a billion dollars. The Country Liberals believe prisoners should be productive, learn job ready skills and be prepared to work.

We do not believe prison is meant to be a holiday camp.

We will deny parole to the worst repeat violent offenders, and will ensure these criminals serve their term in prison away from our communities.

Alcohol isn’t the problem – irresponsible drinking is. Law-abiding Territorians are tired of having to pay the price for the actions of a relatively small group of re-offenders. The Country Liberals will take all steps necessary to keep those who are a constant and repeat threat to the community locked up and off our streets.

Labor’s ‘Banned Drinkers’ Register’ simply does not work.

Last year more than 55,000 people were taken into protective custody or sobering up shelters for drinking related-offences. These are not 55,000 different people. Most were serial re-offenders.

Under a Country Liberals Government you will NOT have to show your licence to buy an alcohol drink from a takeaway outlet.

Alice Springs was once a thriving and energetic community; it had a lifestyle and vibrancy that set it apart from any other town of its size. It was the tourist capital of the Red Centre and a place to do business. Now it has been brought to its knees by increasing violence, racial tension, substance abuse and property crime. We will not allow this to continue.

The Country Liberals have a proud and successful history and if in Government, will once again deliver for Territorians.

In 1972 when the Northern Territory was governed from and by Canberra, the Country Liberals were called the CLP, or “the Mob for the Job”. It was a party formed with allegiance only to the Northern Territory and to Territorians.

That same “Mob” delivered Self-Government to the NT in 1978 and under the guidance of people like Bernie Kilgariff, Sam Calder, Paul Everingham.
and Marshall Perron went on to shape the Territory into the Texas of Australia.

Within days of Self-Government thousands of Territory households became real home owners for the first time. The CLP, living up to that nick-name the “Mob for the Job”, granted freehold title to all residential land in Darwin and all other NT towns at no cost to the home owner.

It was just the start as new roads, bridges and airfields were built to overcome the problems of the Wet. Cultural ties with Asia blossomed into trade links and Asian languages were taught in the Territory’s primary school system. The CLP created a string of national parks and built strategically-placed hotels to underpin a massive expansion of the Territory’s tourism industry.

This was Government for the people by the people. CLP politicians rubbed shoulders with their constituents at the pub, the local shopping centre and the footy. The Country Liberals pioneered Community Cabinet Meetings almost 30 years before Labor rediscovered the idea.

That period of Country Liberal Government lasted from 1974 through until 2001. Those 27 years were characterized by solid economic growth, improvement in education and health services, affordable home ownership and jobs for those who wanted to work.

Today, Terry Mills’ Country Liberals team will once again govern the Northern Territory from the Territory. The Labor Party has done its best to hand back major decisions to Canberra. We will reverse that abdication of duty.

One of our most urgent tasks will be to establish just how much Labor has racked up on the Territory credit card. The Country Liberals fear that despite inheriting a healthy budgetary position, Labor has maxed out to the tune of hundreds and hundreds of millions. This cannot be allowed to continue and the Country Liberals will immediately commission an independent audit of all Territory finances.

The increasing cost of living is hurting all Territorians and as electricity bills soar over the next few years, thanks in large part to Labor’s carbon tax, the Country Liberals will work with the Power and Water Corporation to find ways to ease the cost burden on households and businesses.

Every child needs to have the chance of a decent education. The Country Liberals will ensure Territory education standards are equivalent to or better than anywhere else in Australia…. regardless of whether the child attends school in town or the bush.

We will put more power in the hands of parents, teachers and principals. The Country Liberals will introduce
performance measures supported by objective testing and plain reporting.

It is completely unacceptable that the Henderson Labor Government sets one standard for towns and another for the bush.

Territory businesses want to be left alone to do what they have done for decades – make money responsibly and create sustainable jobs. The bureaucrats have no place in our businesses. A Country Liberals Government will ensure Territory businesses get Government help in handling the repressive aspects of Federal Labor’s new lawyer-friendly industrial relation laws.

The Country Liberals will show we are true friends and strong supporters of our cattle industry. We will do all we can to restore this thriving industry. The Henderson Government paid lip service to supporting our cattle producers, feed growers, truck drivers, road house operators and the hundreds who work in support industries. Once again Territory Labor rolled over to Canberra.

The Country Liberals will not pretend that housing in the Territory is affordable, because it clearly is not. Our first steps to address this will be to restore the balance between the supply and demand of land. We will work with private enterprise to promote the development of denser housing projects resulting in the more efficient use of services.

Our suburban parks should be places where children play, couples exercise and dogs are walked in safety. Play equipment should not be covered in graffiti with rubbish and broken bottles on the lawns. The Country Liberals will clean up these parks, and remove the lay-about drunks who cause most of the problems.

Territory public servants are sick and tired of having to write endless reports that sit in a departmental head’s in-basket. The Country Liberals will ensure that our public servants can once again go to work to do good things – that is concentrate on service delivery.

Territorians deserve better and it’s our job to tackle these issues head on.

The Country Liberals promise less Government. Not More! And a less-intrusive Government where policies originate in the Territory for Territorians – not in Canberra!

Territorians will once again enjoy a lifestyle the envy of other Australians built around an incredible environment and climate.

The Country Liberals propose environmental policies that will protect our precious natural resources. But let us make something very clear... we are protecting those resources for the use of our communities... whether it be for fishing; cycling; walking; boating; camping or even simply sight-seeing.
We believe that the Territory must grow in population, and not only that, but that growth should be in a range that is well above the Australian average. But we have to balance development with the protection of our environment. The Country Liberals will plan for satellite cities linked by an integrated transport system; new road and rail linkages including a spur line from the main rail line from Berrimah into the city – and light rail services.

The Country Liberals made the Northern Territory a unique place to live. In Government, we did our best to keep from telling Territorians how to live their lives. We – strongly supported by Australia’s most dedicated public service – concentrated on delivering massive, crucial and sustainable projects for future generations.

That CLP was indeed the “Mob for the Job”. Now, every single day we benefit from its legacy. Here are just some of its major initiatives:

Litchfield, Douglas Daly, Gregory, Keep River and Charles Darwin national parks; the Alice Springs to Darwin gas pipeline; the Arafura Games; the Masters Games; the Marrara Sports Complex; the Darwin and Alice airports; the Northern Territory University; the V8 Super Cars. The list goes on….

We believe that if you give us the chance, the Country Liberals will once again do things better.
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Law and Order

GETTING VALUE FOR MONEY

Law & Order
The first priority of any government is to keep people safe.

Unfortunately, Territorians have been let down by this Labor Government and crime rates here are among the worst in the country.

You are more likely to be assaulted in the Territory, than any other place in Australia.

The Country Liberals will be tough on crime and make our streets and parks safe places for families to enjoy.

The Country Liberals will:

» Conduct a thorough review of the police force
» Ensure our officers are properly resourced and well managed
» Remove drunks from our streets
» Crackdown on anti-social behaviour
» Enforce mandatory rehabilitation for problem drinkers
» Introduce tougher sentencing for violent crimes

Helping our Police
Putting more police on our streets is the best way to stop crime and deter would be criminals.

The Country Liberals will:

» Expand the Police Force as identified in independent review
» Improve career advancement for local police
» Provide better communications through dedicated call centres
» Improve transparency by releasing quarterly crime statistics

School Based Constables
The Country Liberals will strengthen and prioritise the role of school-based Police officers, especially to work with youth and community liaison. We will ensure that each middle school and comprehensive secondary school has an effective school-based Police program that works with feeder primary schools.

No place for anti-social behaviour
Territorians expect safe streets, to walk in the park without being abused, to not have their businesses or houses defaced, and they deserve to get it.

Drunks will be taken off the streets and forced to undertake rehabilitation before being released back into the community.
The Country Liberals will:

» Introduce mandatory rehabilitation for problem drunks
» Establish a Night Safe Strategy for children
» Protect family environments
» Provide safe homes for victims of violence

Night Safe Strategy
The Country Liberals will introduce a Night Safe Strategy for Children.

It is unacceptable for children to roam the streets late at night unsupervised.

Night Safe is a caring and responsible strategy that engages the Police and the Department of Children & Families.

Mechanisms will be put in place to enable better co-ordination between the agencies to ensure children are looked after.

Protecting Family Environments
Territory families are forced to spend their leisure time in suburban parks and playgrounds that are often littered with rubbish and smashed bottles or defaced by graffiti vandals.

The Country Liberals will support local Councils to help them clean up our parks and make them safe.

Safe homes
Families in private residences who are victims of violence and don’t feel safe in their own homes can apply to have added security measures installed.

The Safe Homes policy will help families stay safe in their own homes by strengthening doors, installing house alarms and security lights, fitting deadlocks, erecting fencing and installing silent monitored alarms that, when activated, lead to the Police Communications Centre.

Tougher sentences for assault
You are more likely to be assaulted in the Territory than anywhere else in the country.

The Country Liberals will amend the Sentencing Act to establish new and meaningful minimum sentencing guidelines for offences involving assault.

Tougher bail
The Country Liberals will make it harder for criminals to get bail.

We will toughen the Bail Act to include any crime that poses a risk to the general public.

This will include home invasions, house breaks, motor vehicle theft, arson and fraud.

Jail means Jail
The Northern Territory has the highest rate of incarceration in prison in the country.
The Territory’s rate of re-offending is also the highest in the country – as much as 70 per cent of the Territory’s prisoners are repeat offenders.

The Henderson Government’s answer to this problem is to build a half a billion dollar prison, which will end up costing $1.8 Billion when lease payments are included.

This is a monument to Labor’s failure to tackle law and order.

The country Liberals will;

» Support a low security prison farm for 200 prisoners in Katherine
» Introduce literacy and numeracy testing of all new inmates and life skills courses for all inmates who can’t read or write
» Establish two “boot camps” programmes for juvenile offenders, one each in the Darwin and Alice Springs regions
» Establish an office of the Inspector of Correctional Services
Economy
GETTING VALUE FOR MONEY

A mountain of debt
The Territory’s fiscal position is fundamentally flawed – with a heavy dependence on credit and an on-going reliance on Commonwealth hand-outs.

The difference between expenditure and income in the Northern Territory is expanding to unsustainable levels... the credit cards are ‘maxed out’. Furthermore, looming increases in interest rates and possible cuts to Commonwealth GST income spell possible trouble for Territory finances.

Waste and Mismanagement
After the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax, the Labor Government received hundreds-of-millions of dollars more than even they expected. This money could have been used to eliminate the Territory’s debt thus reducing costs to businesses and households and building the economy. Instead, the money was squandered.

» Debt means interest – and by the end of the forward estimates the Territory will be paying up to $200 million a year in interest because of Labor’s reckless spending. And this is calculated at today’s low interest levels when most accept that national borrowing costs are set to rise, perhaps sharply.

» In Territory terms, $200 million is a small fortune – it could build five schools and employ hundreds of police, doctors, nurses and teachers.

Since 2008 and the Global Financial Crisis, GST revenues have contracted. Despite this, Government has continued to spend as though the Rivers of Cash will flow forever. Federal Labor has shown us just how to waste billions of dollars on insulation schemes; building the education revolution lunacy, and now with digital set top boxes costing hundreds of dollars when they can be bought for $30. Northern Territory Labor are the same spendthrifts with YOUR money... only on a smaller scale.

Paying the money back
To improve the Territory’s fiscal position, Government must live within its means.

» A Country Liberals Government will target a return to surplus by the end of our first term. But we must stress that is dependent on the Territory financial position being as reported.

» Once the budget is back in surplus, debt can then be repaid.
A bigger economy

Government must also look at expanding the Territory’s economy by boosting its pastoral and horticultural sectors and expanding the industrial base.

» The Country Liberals will continue to push for the arrival of on-shore gas developments and boost down-stream manufacturing opportunities.
» The Country Liberals will help lift the shackles of excessive Government regulation.
A great lifestyle is a complex mix of intelligent planning, affordable housing, safe streets, recreational opportunities such as family fishing areas, family-friendly parks, a clean and accessible environment, and most importantly a sense of community spirit.

The Country Liberals believe that such a lifestyle is what every Territorian aspires to. It is what has attracted many families to the Northern Territory.

**Affordable living**

The cost of renting or buying a home, filling the supermarket trolley, fuelling the car, paying for power and water, buying school gear for the kids, getting the young ones involved in sport – all these expenses are a drain on Territorians and eat away at our capacity to enjoy the great Territory lifestyle.

The lack of affordable housing is a major contributor to our high cost of living and most commentators acknowledge that Labor’s carbon tax will make construction more expensive.

The Country Liberals will put downward pressure on house and land prices by relentlessly opposing Labor’s “biggest lie” the carbon tax and by focusing on supply-side factors relating to:

- Development
- Compliance costs
- Land release
- Zoning for high density development and:
- Increased flexibility to raise building height levels.

**Safe streets**

Territorian families expect to be able to walk our streets in safety. They want to be able to walk to the shops without being abused, and walk and play in the park without being accosted by drunks.

The Country Liberals will take all steps necessary to ensure businesses and homes are safe from vandals.

We will conduct an independent review of the NT police force to make sure our hard-working officers have the personnel and resources to do the job properly.

Drunks will be taken off the streets and forced to undertake rehabilitation before being released back into the community.
Clean parks
Territory families are forced to spend their leisure time in suburban parks and playgrounds that are often littered with rubbish and smashed bottles, or park facilities defaced by graffiti vandals.

The Country Liberals will clean up suburban parks, by being tough on crime and by supporting local councils through shared funding to increase their efforts in bringing families back to our public spaces.

Planning
The Country Liberals believe good planning makes for good neighbors and an enjoyable lifestyle.

We have created a comprehensive strategy called: Planning for Greater Darwin.

It outlines our plan for a future Territory which is about recognising the basic and reasonable expectations of Territorians and delivering on them.

It looks at the water, energy, health, educational and recreational needs and the development of heavy industry at Glyde Point.

It casts a critical eye over our non-built environment, with a focus on mitigating the impacts of natural hazards such as crocodiles, mosquitoes, tropical weather systems and climate change.

Fishing
The Country Liberals are committed to maximising opportunities that will allow recreational fishers to access Territory waterways. This wonderful past-time will get special attention from a Country Liberals Government. We will work with the Education Department and the Amateur Fishermen’s Association of the NT (AFANT) to incorporate this subject into early education opportunities.

A Country Liberals Government would work with AFANT and other representative bodies to develop a priority list that would include:

» Development of a self launch boat ramp at Dundee Beach
» Scoping and costing a boat ramp at Shady Camp
» Identifying locations for another suburban-based boat ramp in Darwin
» Education campaigns highlighting the importance of catch and release
» Ways to improve fisheries management.

Environment
The Country Liberals believe our natural resources are among our greatest assets.

We will reduce our impact on the environment through better waste management practices and adopt practical and common-sense approaches to beautifying our urban streetscapes and parks.
We will preserve the natural wonders of our oceans, waterways and lands, and make sure appropriate infrastructure is in place allowing Territorians access to our great outdoor attractions.
Territorians love living in the Territory, they love the lifestyle, the weather and the people.

But, sadly it comes at a price.

Under Labor, the cost of living in the Territory has skyrocketed - and it’s continuing to go up, rather than down.

People are leaving the place they love – because they simply can’t afford to live here anymore.

A Country Liberals Government will turn that around.

We will make the Territory a more affordable place to live through policies that put downward pressure on the cost of living – particularly in the areas of:

» Housing
» Utilities
» Labour Costs
» Business Operations
» Transport
» Outdoor Recreation
» Sport
» Tourism and;
» Government Charges

Housing
Providing affordable housing will be a priority of a Country Liberals Government.

Currently, we have the highest rents in the country and the second highest median house prices in the country – behind only Sydney. And that can’t continue.

We will restore the balance to supply and demand pressures through timely land release and flexibility in high density zoning.

Business
We will help business reduce costs by:

» Cutting red tape
» Developing programs to help those affected by the Gillard Government’s carbon tax.
» Invest in programs that deliver more skilled and trained workers

These benefits are expected to flow through the community and be reflected at the checkout.

Transport
The Country Liberals will crack down on anti-social behaviour on our public transport to make their use more desirable.
We will also encourage more budget airline carriers through our comprehensive and strategic investment in tourism.

**Sport and recreation**
Families will be better off through generous concessions on sporting costs for children.

We will make outdoor activities like fishing and camping more affordable by ensuring access to our natural resources.

We will develop and invest in our great outdoors and encourage families to enjoy our natural environment.

**Government charges**
The Country Liberals will reduce the burden of government bureaucracy and red tape on business and households.

We will improve service delivery in government programs and will keep costs down through proper management of key departments.