MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

INVESTING IN YOUNGSTERS AT SCHOOL AND IN THE COMMUNITY

25 June 2013

Minister for Education, Peter Chandler, said investing in a child’s early years of education is critically important to development.

“We are putting an additional 61 teachers into the early years of primary school as part of a new model to allocate teachers to schools.

“Additionally, we have salvaged the Child and Family Centres project which the Labor government failed to pull together. Five centres will be built. These family hubs will be extra support to get youngsters off to a good start and at the same time they will strengthen communities.

“The centres will be at Maningrida, Nugukurr, Gunbalanya, Yuendumu and Palmerston.

“For schools, the new effective enrolment model will be fairer, taking account of changes over the whole year, replacing an out-of-date system that relied on a count on only one day of the year.

“There will be adjustments to teacher allocations in the middle and senior years, with a loss of 66 positions, out of 3122 Territory teaching positions.

“There has been a lot of Labor scaremongering about teacher allocation with all sorts of figures bandied around but in reality no teacher will lose their job. More than 66 teachers leave each year, as they do in all jurisdictions; they retire, move interstate or overseas, or have other reasons not to continue.

“The scaremongering continued today. Numbers were bandied around that education was going backwards to 1983 when there were fewer students and teachers, but the reality is that in 1983 there were 1664 teachers for 24,490 students, not 10,000 students as was suggested. Today there are more than 3000 teachers and 29,346 students in Government schools.

“Labor fails to realise that there are more primary students and schools in the Territory than any others, and that’s where the extra teachers will be working.

“Labor should also remember that it is the Country Liberals that has moved teachers into permanent jobs. Under Labor only about a third of teachers had permanency – this was a stressful situation for teachers and not at all beneficial for the students.
“Students do a whole lot better when the teaching staff is stable, they do not have to adjust each year to an unfamiliar teacher in every class. The relationship between the teacher and the students, a classroom climate conducive to learning and effective discipline are key factors in improving the performance of students.

“Other points Labor fails to remember is that the Territory is equal to or has smaller class sizes than other jurisdictions, schools decide on their range of subjects, there is no change to the maximum of 27 students in a class and teachers will not be forced to teach another subject.”

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