MEDIA RELEASE

Lynne Walker
MEMBER FOR NHULUNBUY

14 May 2014

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION REVIEW IGNORES TERRITORY CHOICES

Member for Nhulunbuy, Lynne Walker, said the Indigenous Education Review launched by the Education Minister, Peter Chandler, today was disappointing.

“The recommendations in the Indigenous Education Review are an all or nothing approach to education for Indigenous children in the regions,” Ms Walker said.

“Overall this review recommends a shift of students from community to urban boarding schools in Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek, but offers nothing for those students who do not want to leave family or cultural obligations in their home communities.

“What is to happen to these children that are left behind?

“What is the future of homeland schools?

“It is disappointing that the CLP Government is planning to force future generations off their country if they want an education.

“More worrying is the apparent lack of alternatives for those young people who do not wish to seek further formal education. What options will they be offered given the lack of options such as trade training opportunities in the bush?”

Ms Walker said Minister Chandler is proposing to adopt the Cape York Institute Model after a three-day visit to communities that do not share the same complex cultural, social and education issues as remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory.

Ms Walker also said that the review's recommendation on teaching in first language had such a narrow parameter that it was effectively outlawing the teaching of first language in many remote regions across the Territory.

“The Minister's acceptance of the review's recommendation of rolling out a Territory-wide girls’ engagement program, similar to the boys' Clontarf program, was welcome but hypocritical given he had scrapped the already effective GEMS program in Territory schools,” Ms Walker said.
"Labor remains deeply disappointed that the Minister is brushing aside the views of respected Indigenous educators and is determined to remove parents from the decision-making process in the education of their children."

Media contact: Cathryn Tilmouth 0427 500 667