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CLP DODGY TEACHER CUT NUMBERS EXPOSED

Shadow Minister for Education, Natasha Fyles today called on the Giles Government to stop slashing teacher numbers following the revelation that 125 teachers have been lost from Territory schools in the past 12 months.

“This huge cut is much more than the 35 positions Education Minister Peter Chandler claimed previously,” Ms Fyles said.

She said as recently as 12 June Minister Chandler told the Estimates Committee “the reality is there are 35 fewer teachers at this time than we had last year”.

“The real number was released under Estimates questions from the Labor Opposition exposing teacher losses four times higher than the CLP Government admitted. The CLP are also slashing classroom support staff.

“Minister Chandler has waited until the very last moment to answer a question I put on notice at Estimates to confirm there are 125 fewer teachers in Territory public schools.

“It reveals there were 2,596 full time equivalent teaching positions in 2013 and there are now 2,471 – 125 fewer.”

Ms Fyles said the Minister Chandler had previously claimed no school would lose more than five teachers, however at least 10 schools have lost more than five teachers each, with Sanderson Middle School the big loser, shedding 7.6 teaching positions.

“The Bush has also been hit hard by the CLP’s cuts. Shepherdson College in Galiwin’ku on Elcho Island has lost 7 teaching positions and a total of 47 teaching positions have been cut across the Arnhem region,” Ms Fyles said.

“Compounding the teacher losses, 60 support positions have also been cut from schools, meaning that more pressure is put on teachers and there is less individual attention on students as a result.
“Average class sizes in Territory government schools are also up. The average for years 7-10 has jumped from 15.5 to 19 and the average for years 11-12 has jumped from 14 to 18.

“While Adam Giles is busy spending on spin the CLP's education cuts are hurting our students. He has the wrong priorities.

“At a time when he should be focused on the best education for Territory children, these cuts are taking our students in the wrong direction.”

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