Shadow Attorney General Natasha Fyles today welcomed the Federal Government’s backflip on community legal service funding cuts but called on the CLP Government to do more to reverse other Federal funding cuts affecting Territory services.

“Public and legal sector pressure has forced the Federal Government to reverse legal funding cuts that would have risked Australian’s losing access to legal representation, including victims of domestic violence.

“The Federal Government recognised their mistake here and while the CLP joined the call to reverse legal aid funding, the CLP need to do more to force the reversal of other federal cuts that will see important services close across the Territory.

“The Federal funding cuts to the Environmental Defenders Office, which provides specialised community legal services to Territorians on environmental and planning laws, needs to be reversed.

“Despite the Australian Productivity Commission recognising the value of this service, the CLP has rolled over to federal funding cuts that will disadvantage Territorians, and also failed to fund the EDO despite other state governments doing so.

“The CLP also need to come clean on what it is doing to lobby the Federal government to reverse funding cuts to the Territory under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

“Community pressure has seen CLP Senator Nigel Scullion finally release a list of organisations that received IAS funding, and surprisingly it reveals the NT Government is a beneficiary.

“Adam Giles hid the fact the NT Government even applied for funding, let alone what he money is for, and it begs the question, has the NT Government benefitted at the expense of Indigenous and community organisations and Indigenous jobs?”

“Organisations like the GREATS Youth Service at Maningrida, which delivers vital services, is facing closing its youth centre and ceasing programs because it has been hit with an 80 per cent cut to its Budget under the IAS cuts.

“GREATS is a successful community-driven service that has done significant work to reduce youth suicide. To lose this service would be a tragedy and a Government agency cannot replace a service with community connections.
“Adam Giles has broken every promise he’s made to the bush and the CLP Government has proven incapable of working with Indigenous Territorians to Close the Gap.

“Funding the CLP Government instead of Indigenous organisations makes a mockery of self-determination.”

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