Chief Minister Adam Giles says the Northern Territory’s spending on education will again exceed $1 billion in the 2016-17 Budget.

Speaking at the Australian Education Union conference in Darwin on Saturday, Mr Giles said the Education budget will be $77 million higher than last year and $120 million higher than Labor’s last Education budget.

Mr Giles also highlighted Territorians’ growing confidence in the government school system, with an increase in total enrolments for 2016.

“As of mid-February 2016, there were 653 more enrolments in government schools compared to the same time last year,” he said.

“Just over $7 million has been allocated in 2016 school budgets for schools where there has been an increase in the number of students enrolled and attending.

“The additional funding for those schools has been included in their 2016 global school budgets.”

Mr Giles criticised the Labor Party for promising $300,000 for each NT school, public and private, for minor works. He said it’s less in total than what the Government is providing.

“It’s like a light version of the Gillard Government’s wasteful school halls program, but worse,” he said.

“It is totally at odds with the Gonski needs-based model Labor claims to support.

“What we are doing is investing according to what individual schools need, following the priority works list based on schools’ annual submissions to the Department of Education.”

Mr Giles said the Government has invested a total of $68.5 million for similar works as part of the Boosting our Economy – Education Works package.
“We are investing a lot more than Labor on government schools and less than Labor on non-government schools,” he said.

“More importantly, our investment is targeted according to what individual schools need, following the Department’s priority works list.”

Education Minister Peter Chandler said the Territory’s teacher-student ratio is the smallest in the country — in 2014 it was 12.6 students per teacher.

“We have the highest expenditure per student in Australia,” Mr Chandler said.

“We’re committed to continuing to invest in education and the future of young Territorians and providing families with choice.

“We all want the same thing — enabling young Territorians to be the best they can be; it’s time Labor put aside their tired philosophy and started to focus on student outcomes.”

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