Natasha Fyles  
Leader of Government Business

**Estimates to be opened up to Territorians**

7 June 2017

The Territory Labor Government will open up the Budget Estimates Committee hearings to everyday Territorians, businesses and organisations for the first time in the history of Territory Parliament.

Territorians, businesses and organisations will be able to send written questions about Budget 2017 to the Estimates committee, which will then be put to Government Ministers on their behalf by members of the committee.

The CLP and Independent members have made it clear that they have no interest in representing their constituents at the hearings, deciding to not show up to estimates at all.

The Leader of Government Business Natasha Fyles has written to the Independent and Opposition members of the Estimates Committee, urging them to do the job they were elected to do rather than play politics with the estimates process.

“The Territory Labor Government believes in open and transparent Government and has been restoring trust after four years of CLP chaos - making improvements to Estimates to increase scrutiny is the latest thing we have done,” Ms Fyles said.

“The CLP and Independent members are letting each and every one of their constituents down by saying they won’t turn up.

“The CLP and Independents have proven themselves redundant as an opposition, so we are inviting Territorians do it for them.

“We want to ensure all Territorians are represented at the Estimates hearings, even if the CLP and Independents can’t be bothered turning up.

“Territorians, Territory Businesses and community groups will now be able to ask robust and probing questions of Government.”

The Northern Territory Government has made significant changes to the parliamentary system to make it more transparent.

Allowing the estimates committee to scrutinise Government’s annual reports, which track the government’s delivery of programs against the budget, is an important part.
This was something that we flagged in August 2015 to increase scrutiny and I would urge the Opposition and Independents to give it a go.

“The Gunner government has further provided scrutiny by allowing questions on Wednesday only from Opposition,” Ms Fyles said.

We have also extended General Business Day for Opposition and Independent parliament business, providing extra time and bringing the time forward to a mid-afternoon start. This provides for the public to attend and allows for television coverage during that evening.

Territorians can submit a question on the Budget at email at budget.questions@nt.gov.au from tomorrow.

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