Terry Mills
Leader of the Opposition

CLP responds to struggling Territory business
17 February 2004

Treasurer Syd Stirling has been panicked into acting like an hysterical schoolboy by the CLP’s plans to reduce the rate of payroll tax and increase the threshold to better the regime in Queensland – now regarded as the lowest in Australia, CLP Leader Terry Mills said today.

“Yesterday Mr Stirling said hospitals and schools would have to be closed. Today its land taxes and a fire service levy,” Mr Mills said. “The CLP is about reducing taxes, not increasing them and introducing new ones like this Government is guilty of.

“The reality is this Government knows the CLP’s attempts to meet the needs of business will be well received by business and it is now running scared. We are responding to business which is something the Martin Government has failed to do in almost three years of office.

“We are going to give Territory business the best payroll tax regime in Australia and get the Territory moving again.

“Under this Government the Territory has gone backwards. Territory Treasury has revised downwards our growth forecasts by half because we have an under performing economy; more than 3000 jobs have been lost from the Territory since May 2002 and Territorians are packing up and leaving in their droves.

“No wonder business confidence in the Martin Government is minus 32.

“The Territory has more federal funding than ever pouring into the Territory through the GST.

“Payroll tax can and will be phased out as GST revenue continues to rise. We will change the payroll tax system – and change it fundamentally,” Mr Mills said.

“The GST revenue should not be seen as a windfall so that government can indulge in some of their own policy fantasies, their social experiments, their pet projects, or their touting for votes.

“It should be seen for what it is – a new tax system that was meant to replace many of the insidious taxes on jobs, business and industry, and the earnings of ordinary Territorians.”

Ends.