Population woes continue - NT has second slowest growth rate in the country

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The population problems in the Northern Territory continue to be evident in the latest Bureau of Statistics figures that were released today, says Opposition Leader Terry Mills.

“Figures released today show that The Northern Territory had a population growth rate in 2003 of 0.3%, which is the second lowest in the country, behind only the ACT,” Mr Mills said today.

“In 2003 there were 2,900 people that left the Territory and were not replaced.”

“In 1996 19,100 people moved to the Territory. In 2003, only 14,800 people chose to make the Territory home from interstate. This is a sad indictment on the economic environment and way of life that three years of Labor has produced.”

“Whilst the overall population has shown a slight increase, it is only births that are keeping our population rates afloat. The fact is that people are voting with their feet and are leaving the Territory at a faster rate than they arrive, and the Martin Labor Government must shoulder much of the blame.”

“Under Labor, the Territory has lost its status as the ‘can do' part of Australia, and unfortunately, the latest budget will do little to reverse this trend.”

“The Chief Minister has been promising a policy statement on population for over a year, yet we have still seen nothing.”

“Housing price figures that have also been released by the ABS show that it is getting harder and harder to buy a house in the NT, further discouraging people from taking up permanent residence here.”

“The CLP repeats its call for the Government to increase the threshold on stamp duty to make housing much more affordable, and reduce the rate of payroll tax to give relief to business and encourage them to employ more people.”

“The high cost of living is continuing to act as a disincentive for people to move to the Northern Territory, and decisions such as the recent increase in the cost of registering a car and electricity price rises for business will only serve to increase the problem.”