What Labor Don’t Want the People of the Territory To Know About the Education Budget

The Labor government is playing a smoke and mirrors game with the Employment, Education and Training 2005 Budget, Shadow Minister Dr. Richard Lim said today.

Dr Lim said Labor government claims that it has improved funding for Education resources and infrastructure cannot be taken seriously because the cost of the current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) with teachers has not been finalised and therefore, included.

“For Labor to say that funding for resources and infrastructure has increased by such a large amount is not accurate. Last year, the DEET Budget was $540 million and this year $581 million – an increase of $41 million. But this does not include the final cost of the EBA.

“The current Teachers’ EBA is not yet settled. In other words, this government does not have any idea what the EBA will cost.

“And it is confusing to learn on the one hand that there is money in the Budget, but on the other, Labor is telling teachers that it does not have the money to make them the best paid in the country, a pre-election promise they made in 2001.

“Labor has to tell Territorians whether the cost of the current teacher enterprise bargaining and the resulting teachers salaries will be included in the Budget allocation of $581m.

“Further, has the $42 million commitment to implement parts of the Secondary Education Review been included as well? No one knows just what is happening and is further evidence that the estimates process must be held before the Territory election.

“For Labor to say that funding for resources and infrastructure has increased by such a large amount is spurious to say the least and to not allow scrutiny of the Budget before an election obviously shows that Labor has something to hide.”