Labor’s Record

Labor have not been innovative or decisive in their approach to solving the growing problem of the shortage of skilled workers in the Northern Territory. There are no comprehensive programs in place to offer real opportunities for those wanting to take up a trade or traineeship and to keep our young people in the Territory.

This is a problem that was identified several years ago but Labor refused to acknowledge it and refused to plan for it. Under Labor, we have seen the unemployment rate climb to the highest in Australia, we have lost 1,300 jobs last year alone, we have a declining employment participation rate and we have seen no plan to provide industry-led training programs to keep Territorians here or to attract interstate families to move here.

Further, Labor have taken their eyes off the ball and have not put real, industry-led programs in place to make apprenticeships and traineeships attractive for our children. Labor’s likening of the Darwin Technical College to something out of the 1950’s indicates their view of the proposal. They fail to see that the Technical College will offer another avenue to attract people to pursue a traditional trade or traineeship.

Labor’s promise of ‘$290 m to fund 10,000 trainees’ (*NT News, 3 May 2005*), is a sham at best, with the 2005 Budget showing the government has cut the training budget by almost $2.8m but wants us to believe that it will still be able to train 2,500 kids. Labor’s promise is shallow – an exercise in awe, not reality.

A quick look at the 2005 Labor Budget shows that there will be a shortfall of some 300 apprenticeship and traineeship commencements for this financial year just about to end. According to the government’s own estimates, it will not be able to meet its targets. (*Budget Book Number 3 2005-06, page 89*)
The Labor Government budgeted for 2,700 traineeship and apprenticeship commencements for year 2004-05, but now says that it can only deliver up to 2,400 by the end of this financial year.

Yet it calls on Territorians to believe that it will deliver 2,500 apprentices and trainees each year for the next 4 years. That is not good enough.

In contrast, the Country Liberal Party has the policies and programs to keep our young people here in the Territory instead of having them have interstate for work. We want to create a vibrant, exciting and economically secure future for families and their children.