Terry Mills
Leader of the Opposition

CLP pledges stronger emphasis on a career in the trades

27 September 2004

Prime Minister John Howard's plan to establish a Technical College in Darwin will do what the Martin Government has failed to do _ address the Territory's chronic skills shortage, CLP Leader Terry Mills said today.

Mr Mills said the Territory's skills shortage was one of the biggest problems facing Territory business at the moment.

"It was reinforced by Alcan which has been able to identify only 60 local positions out of 1700 for its Gove mine expansion," Mr Mills said.

"The Martin Government must shoulder much of the blame for this because it should have spent the past three years skilling a workforce knowing this and other projects were in the making.

"Prime Minister Howard's plan will value add to the current vocational education programs for students interested in gaining a trade while undertaking their secondary schooling."

Mr Mills pledged a future CLP Government would be putting a stronger focus on the value of trade and technical education.

"Not enough emphasis has been put on the value of a career in the trades and the many more opportunities that will become available as the Territory develops," Mr Mills said.

"The Territory needs people in engineering, electrical, construction and motor trades. If the Federal Government is going to set up a Technical College in Darwin to train school leavers in these trades it can only be a good thing."

Ends