2nd February 2005

Minister for Employment, Education and Training Missing While Federal Minister Presents Australian Technical College in Darwin

The Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Syd Stirling, was noticeably absent today at the Federal Minister for Vocational and Technical Education, Gary Hardgrave’s presentation on the Australian Technical College.

Shadow Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Dr Richard Lim said, “It was disappointing that the NT Minister was absent from the presentation, particularly as it is imperative that the Martin Labor Government gets intimately involved with industry leaders in the Northern Territory to develop the ATC.

“The Federal Minister presented an exciting concept for skills training in senior high schools for the Territory, addressing skills shortages in industries such as heavy engineering; motor trades (from mowers to heavy equipment); housing construction (with all the associated trades); commercial cookery; and electro technology.

“The skills shortages in the Northern Territory are widespread.

“If we do not address these skills shortages immediately, business will move elsewhere and the Territory will miss out on the development that is looming just over the horizon.

“The Northern Territory Government has failed in its Jobs Plan with the inadequate take-up of apprenticeships and traineeships.

“Industry has been complaining for the last three years that government provision of resources for training has not kept pace with industry demands. Consequently, there is a tremendous shortage of tradespeople to service industry and the community.

“The Martin Labor Government must get on the front foot on this initiative and work with industry to ensure that Darwin has an Australian Technical College as soon as is practicable. This will improve our skills base upon which business can draw from.

“A CLP Government will address the skills shortages through strong support for industry to foster high levels of participation from senior high school students and school leavers”.

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