A CLP Government will expand economic activity on all fronts, including accelerated reinstatement of the Territory’s relationships with its near Asian neighbours.

We will establish “Territory 2020” - a 15 year economic development program, firmly focussed on achieving the best possible longer term position for the Territory in the Australian, Regional and Global context.

A CLP Government will promote and support Territory business and encourage strong inward investment to achieve improved economic outcomes and job growth.

We will introduce a series of real assistance initiatives directed at strengthening the Territory business environment.

Annual additional funding - $74.2 million

We will accelerate development of Darwin and the Territory as the key Australian Regional Business Centre for Asia/Pacific activities.

We will use best practice models elsewhere for economic development to provide coordination and facilitation of public/private resource information, marketing and logistical activities, using both physical and electronic means to create a singular focus on the Territory.

The Territory used to have well established and developing links with several East Asian countries but those close links, created, nurtured and developed by successive CLP Governments, have been allowed to diminish under the Martin Labor Government. The CLP will actively pursue re-engagement with its near Asian neighbours, increasing our support in areas of trade, cultural, sporting and social exchange activities.

We will restructure the Department of Business, Industry and Resource Development with the addition of a dedicated and well resourced Bureau of International Relations and Trade as the primary vehicle to re-establish our near Asian connections and to elevate the development of Territory trade, tourism and cultural opportunities across the world.

We will recruit specialist staff with appropriate language skills to assist the Territory in re-establishing its credentials as the Gateway to Asia.

We will increase our support and resourcing for the International Business Council within the Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

We will seek to attract LAWASIA back to Darwin after its loss to Brisbane, due to the indifference of the Martin Labor Government.

We will further re-establish our specialist consultants throughout the region particularly those in the BIMP EAGA growth polygon.
Territory 2020 - The Economic Future

We will accelerate our commitment to engage with the China market – the fastest growth area in the world. We will work with the Commonwealth to gain maximum penetration in that area. We will also move to identify how the Territory may capitalise on the USA/Australia and yet to be signed off Free China Agreements.

We will lend greater support and revitalise Territory EXPO to ensure once again it becomes the pre-eminent trade fair of Northern Australia, interacting with the region.

We will undertake an active program of trade missions as a high priority for local businesses. We will assist Territory business people with travel to take advantage of such trade missions, as was previously the case under former CLP Governments.

We will increase our efforts to facilitate Territory companies’ opportunities to access AUSAID contracts in the region.

In contrast to the cutbacks by the Martin Labor Government, we will reassess and where appropriate, augment the level of assistance extended to all trade and industry associations to ensure they have the capacity and resources operate as effective partners in our plan for Territory growth.

These associations are Voice of Territory business. They make a vital contribution to progress of Territory business and the Territory growth effort overall. As such, they should be encouraged and strongly supported by Government.

A CLP Government will provide that support.

**We will introduce a revised Business Growth package**

We will put in place an investment encouragement strategy to assist sustainable businesses to establish or expand in the Territory.

The emphasis will be on building our modest manufacturing base and attracting investment in pioneer industries, however assistance will be available for existing business in any viable area of activity across the Territory.

As already announced, we will immediately remove a range of general business taxes. These initial tax reductions will involve duties such as non-residential conveyancing, commercial leasing, non-quotable market securities, duty on hiring arrangements and electronic debits.

As well implementing as the proposed reduced threshold limits, we will also reduce the payroll tax rate by a massive 27% from 6.2% to 4.5%, which will make the Territory the lowest Payroll Tax Zone in Australia.

Our initial reduction program will include not only the above taxes but examination and removal of other business tax imposts up to a total of $67.2m. We will continue examination of the full tax base and further reductions will occur over time as the economy grows. The current initiatives involve the single biggest reform to business costs ever experienced in the Territory. It demonstrates that we are serious about stimulating the business sector and in making the Territory an attractive business destination.

These are real savings and they will happen now for the benefit of Territory businesses, not at some time in the future, as proposed by the Martin Labor Government.

Territory 2020 - The Economic Future
We will complete the Outback Connect Program

We will work with service providers and the Commonwealth to ensure all Territorians have and will continue to have access to contemporary standard communications throughout the NT for business, education and leisure purposes at costs no greater than other parts of Australia.

This requires the Territory to maintain a good understanding of the status of communications in Australia and the Territory and to require any gaps in service to be provided.

We will pursue further Defence Expansion in the Region

We will accelerate our efforts with the Federal Government for the establishment of further military infrastructure and permanent basing of personnel within the region and for the extended use of the Territory location and facilities for the training of both Australian and Allied services and supply of support and maintenance services for major equipment.

The major re-equipment upgrade now underway, including both land-based and airborne equipment, presents a unique opportunity to establish Darwin as the centre for armoured maintenance in Australia.

A CLP government will work with the defence industry to establish the additional infrastructure to make this a reality. We will provide additional support to the Australian Industry Defence Network in the Territory to enable that organisation to increase its representation of Territory defence industry interests.

We will build on the Railway

We will build on the railway infrastructure now established to ensure that we maximise the potential of this major initiative which was put in place during our previous term of Government. This will include a more active mineral exploration program along the rail corridor to utilise the transport capacity available.

The development of modern freight handling infrastructure will be a priority. We will particularly focus on opportunities which will help get Territory primary products to Southern markets more efficiently and quickly.

A CLP Government will work closely with the private sector operators of the railway and re-energise efforts to ensure that the “Gateway to Asia” concept of this infrastructure as envisaged by the former CLP government, when it brought the development to fruition, is realised.

We will provide additional resources to the Darwin Port Authority to allow it to better market the Darwin Port world wide.

We will pursue the establishment of an Australian Economic Zone in the Top End.

We will seek Commonwealth cooperation to create a special economic zone to take advantage of proximity to Asia, the gas resources and the railway.

Territory 2020 - The Economic Future

We will accelerate expansion of Energy Development
Continuing exploration of additional gas supply to maintain and expand this major industry sector will be critical to the future of the Territory.

The CLP will build on its success in getting Bayu-Undan Gas onshore by again working in partnership with the Commonwealth Government to maximise gas opportunities for the Northern Territory. In 2000 the CLP Government arranged a meeting with the Bayu-Undan and Sunrise partners with the Prime Minister which resulted in agreements on the way forward for both projects. Bayu-Undan proceeded to construction stage but issues with Sunrise have not yet been resolved. The CLP Government will immediately facilitate discussions to decide the way forward.

The CLP will accelerate investigations into additional opportunities for the onshore use of offshore gas

We will also seek to ensure that the benefits of future onshore gas projects will positively contribute to lower power costs for Territorians, including individuals and businesses.

We will increase Research and Development activities

We will increase our efforts to establish formal connections and collaborative arrangements with major Australian and overseas research universities in areas of interest. We will establish a new upgraded NT Research Council and a Development Fund for Innovative Development for Territory Areas of Special Interest, eg Solar & Tidal Energy, Tropical and Arid Zone Management, Tropical Agriculture and will partner with related Commonwealth programs to maximise funding.

We will accelerate our efforts to attract world class researchers to locate to the Territory.

We will adopt a First Job Program for Territory employers

A CLP Government will put in place a package of incentives to encourage employment of school leavers and graduates from Charles Darwin University into apprenticeship and trainee programmes to avoid interstate loss.

The package will include an exemption from a requirement for employers to have workers compensation insurance for these employees for three years and include Government directly paying wage subsidies to trainees.

Government will underwrite workers compensation claims for these employees during this period.

Further, during this period, the salary of these new employees will not be taken into account in assessing payroll tax threshold levels as a further incentive to employ young Territorians.

We will encourage more students through the payment of bursaries to take up apprenticeships and traineeships, with these bursaries continuing with the successful completion of each year of the training.

We will work constructively with the Federal Government to develop the Darwin Technical College which will provide technical and trades tuition for Years 11 and 12 students and apprentices.

Territory 2020 - The Economic Future

We will assist Small Business, including home based businesses, by making Expert Advice readily available
The Territory has an unacceptable level of bankruptcies among our small business community. The CLP is committed to assisting small business make a ‘go of it’.

A CLP Government will further encourage the development of expert advisory services in the Territory who will operate under contract with Government to advise Territory small business on areas such as business planning, risk management, technology, insurance, finance, marketing and communications.

These services will also be available to existing businesses that are faced with special circumstances such as growth restructuring and specific issue resolution. They will also assist local businesses to prepare themselves to bid for Government work.

**We will expand the scope of the Territory Insurance Office to encourage greater investment in the Territory**

To provide maximum scope for future expansion and reinvestment in the Territory, a CLP Government will free up the Territory Insurance Office to allow its operation outside the Territory.

**We will establish an innovation capital fund to promote and assist develop innovative ideas from people and small firms that lack financial capacity**

A CLP Government will commit an initial capital fund of $10m and a further $1m per year will be added until the fund is self-sustaining. The fund will be professionally run and fully accountable and be overseen by an expert Private Sector Advisory Board, to ensure only suitably qualified projects are supported.

The Fund will be expected to earn a commercial return over the long term with successes offsetting failures. It will develop expertise and link into relevant Commonwealth programs to maximise the funding opportunity.

**We will provide Services on a Cost Recovery Basis to Other Jurisdictions to increase scale efficiencies and reduce Territory costs**

The Territory has extremely high per capita costs for most services and can reduce the costs per unit serviced and increase jobs for Territorians by increasing the number of people serviced. We will investigate the feasibility of sourcing clients from Australia, particularly regional Queensland, WA and SA, and overseas.

Options for this initiative will be investigated but initially will focus on areas such as:

- Health, particularly specialist services and aero medical services.
- Education, particularly further expansion of overseas students in secondary and tertiary areas.

Any additional recurrent and capital outlays will depend on the success of marketing efforts to expand the service base. It is envisaged the initiative will be self-funding over time.

**Territory 2020 - The Economic Future**

We will upgrade the promotion of Territory made products and industries including establishment of a dedicated Trade Commission to promote Territory exports.
An increased effort to promote Territory industry is required. We will institute an accelerated program across all areas of activity throughout the Territory to identify product – goods and services – that can be sold into the region and beyond.

We will provide maximum encouragement and trade assistance and representation to get those products and services to the market.

**We will Introduce and extend mandatory trade licensing for improved consumer Protection**

Stricter enforcement of licensing laws for in-state and out-of-state contractors will also apply.

**We will extend the single industry licence approach**

We need to make the licensing of Territory industry as simple and efficient as possible. A composite licence covering all areas of a particular enterprise - one application: one fee - streamlines both start-up and ongoing business management.

**We will introduce a number of new measures for Government Purchasing and Contracts**

The Martin Labor Government suffers a cultural cringe when it comes to awarding work to Territory business.

The number of consultancies awarded interstate has increased dramatically under the Martin Labor Government to the detriment of Territory business.

The unprecedented numbers of certificates of exemption awarded by the Martin Labor Government will be reduced. Notwithstanding occasions do arise where a certificate of exemption is justified, a CLP Government will introduce a far more stringent system to help protect and grow local industry and will apply a greater level of scrutiny to applications for such exemptions.

Companies, their directors and other individuals convicted of corporate wrongdoing, business malpractice, unethical and unconscionable behaviour will be in future ineligible for licensed activity in the Territory and barred indefinitely from government contract work.

We will strengthen local preference policies for Government contract work and we will not allow Government work to be awarded outside the Territory, where there are qualified Territory businesses available to do the job and can deliver the product or service at a competitive rate.

Qualification for Territory preference status will include either a strong track record to apprenticeship training, permanent residence of business principals or property ownership and investment within the Territory.

**Territory 2020 - The Economic Future**

Where a supplier or contractor outside the Territory is selected for Government work they will be expected to partner with local business to provide local content. That requirement will apply equally to all sectors including professional services such as consultancy, legal and accountancy firms.
We will re-establish the NT as Australia’s pre-eminent regulatory environment for Gaming activity

The Territory once led the world in this area. We propose to regain the initiative.

We will examine current Gaming legislation and examine contemporary world developments which may be adopted to enable us to again place the Territory at the forefront of Gaming Regulation, to help us attract major gaming business to base activities in the Territory.