31st May 2005

A STATEMENT BY OPPOSITION LEADER, DENIS BURKE, ON BEHALF OF THE COUNTRY LIBERAL PARTY.

I believe in the Territory, its people and its future, but we must take action now if we are to make it the economic powerhouse it once was and could be again.

We must take action now to win back our streets and parks and to prevent any further erosion of our unique lifestyle.

The Country Liberal Party and I are prepared to take that action.

Now is not the time for the gloss and hype and unfulfilled promises that have been the staple diet of the Martin Labor government.

The Martin Government has failed Territorians and their record of economic management confirms this.

Over the past four years we have seen:

- Unemployment hit record levels, currently at 6.0% - the highest on the mainland – a jump of 13% in just one year.

- The failure by the Martin Government to reach one economic growth forecast.

- Not one major infrastructure project started and completed.
- A net loss of people from the Territory to other states.
- A net loss of jobs.
- Government spending overshooting targets and an increase in debt.
- Taxes increases where Territorians are now paying $1466 per head – up a massive $140 in just one year.

And all of this overlaid by a GST windfall of $249 million since 2003/04 and a further windfall of $683 million over the next five years.

The Martin Government has had a dream run with windfall gains. Never before has a Territory Government been so flush with money. And never before have we seen so little in return for it.

The question at this election is who has the energy, the will, the vision for the future, the drive and the leadership to make the Territory the great place it once was.

Who has the track record and the energy to;

- rebuild our infrastructure and get new projects up and running;
- who has the energy to stimulate investment and jobs;
- who has the energy and drive to properly manage our mineral resources and natural wealth;
- who has the energy and the will to fix our health system, our schools;
- who has the energy to reinvigorate our tourism industry
- who has the energy and the will to tackle and fix the law and order issues that undermine our lifestyle?
My commitment extends to the families of the Territory to help them get ahead by standing up for community values and against noisy interest groups;

- by giving tax relief;
- by encouraging and supporting small business;
- by cracking down on anti-social behaviour.

So this election is about several critical action points, action we need to take now for the Territory’s future. If elected the Country Liberal Party will immediately:

- Introduce the most sweeping tax reform in the Territory’s history to stimulate businesses and jobs via our $67 million Business Tax Relief Plan.

- Introduce tough new laws with our Zero Tolerance Policy to crack down on anti-social behaviour. The CLP will not tolerate shocking and abusive language, fighting, urinating and defecating in our streets and parks, drunkenness, begging and other street offences.

- Rebuild our ailing economic infrastructure with a bold plan that includes fixing our beef roads, bridges, tourism infrastructure, water storage and delivery.

- Move to deal with the cost of electricity and supply – an area of looming importance to householders and business and the future development of the Territory.

- Relieve the burden on our hospital and health system so that people can get the service they need, not the delays they suffer.

- Move to establish the Territory as the most attractive place to achieve home ownership.
• Reinvigorate our tourism industry to once again make the Territory the most exciting and dynamic place to visit.

At the outset I give this commitment. The CLP will not enter into a bidding war. We have fully costed and funded plans to take the Territory ahead. This election is about who can best manage the Budget and the windfall gains we have had with the GST and to prioritise those windfalls.

The CLP stands for a strong, dynamic Territory with a powerhouse economy that fuels our living standards, where every Territorian can share in the proceeds of economic growth.

We stand for a Territory where businesses, both small and large, can flourish and prosper.

We stand for a Territory where families can safely enjoy our unique lifestyle – where it is safe to go to the park or stroll down the street, where locals and tourists alike are not harassed or intimidated.

Only the Country Liberal Party has the energy, the drive and the will to achieve the full potential of the Territory in partnership with Territorians themselves.