Tim Baldwin
Shadow Minister for Primary Industry & Fisheries
Environment & Heritage, and
Parks & Wildlife

Time for Labor to commit to Adelaide River closure

11 February 2004

The Martin Labor Government should end its dithering and announce the closure time frame for commercial fishing in the Adelaide River at the AFFANT Annual General Meeting this Sunday 15th February, CLP Shadow Minister for Fisheries Tim Baldwin said today.

"At the last election Labor made a commitment to close Adelaide River to commercial fishing, a move the CLP supports as a follow-up to its own initiatives to close Territory rivers including the McArthur River and reallocate the fishing effort from commercial to recreational," Mr Baldwin said.

"Both the recreational and the commercial fishing sectors need to be given a clear outline of the Government's position regarding the future of the barramundi fishery providing all interested parties with:

· a defined road map leading to agreement on future river closures;
· voluntary no-go areas
· buy back of commercial licences over the next ten years
· and better access and so on.

"Clear annunciation of Labor's policy in regard to these issues will give certainty to the commercial sector who have made substantial investments in their licences and also to the recreational angling community who have waited patiently for some direction from Government.

"The Adelaide River issues have been broadly canvassed in the community and considered by the Government's own Aquatic Resources User Group Forum and it is now time for Government to get on with a decision regarding the long awaited closure.

"It is my understanding that stakeholders involved in the Government's fishery forums have agreed on the principles for the closure of the Adelaide River and the reduction of commercial fishing effort from the barramundi fishery. There is no valid reason to delay a proactive decision on future fishing activities in this popular river.

"The AFANT meeting will also be the ideal opportunity for Government to clearly articulate their long term strategy regarding barramundi fishing including closure of rivers in general and importantly, the buy-back of commercial fishing effort to ensure the commercial barramundi industry remains viable."