30 January 2005

Opposition Cynical on Timing of Fuel Inquiry

The news that the Martin government will hold an inquiry into the high price of fuel is welcomed by the CLP Opposition Leader Terry Mills but questions the timing of the announcement and why it has taken the Chief Minister so long to listen to Territorians.

Mr Mills said, “Territory fuel prices are at record levels and promises Clare Martin made to Territorians about fuel inquiries as Opposition Leader may be finally realised. After being in government for three and a half years, the Chief Minister may actually do something about fuel prices.

“However, if this inquiry is like the Secondary Education Review, then we will not be expecting any action by the government. The Secondary Education Review took one year, $1 million and the government have not acted on any of the recommendations. I hope Territorians don’t get their hopes up by the announcement of a fuel price inquiry.

The timing of the announcement also appears to be a pre-election manoeuvre designed to try and cover up the Chief Ministers failure do act before now.

“I believe the community will see through a cynical stunt like this and is only due to rising public anger and Clare Martin’s unwillingness to address fuel prices for three and a half years. She was a vocal advocate for a fuel price inquiry when in Opposition and said in Parliament in February 2001;

‘Well, the impact of fuel prices is making people angry. It is making people angry every time they fill up their car; every time they have to go on a trip; every time they go to the supermarket; every time they buy anything.’

“If Clare Martin was aware of Territorians concerns in 2001, why has it taken four years for her to act?

“While I believe that Territorians pay too much for their fuel, I question the timing of this inquiry given that an election could be called at any time. The Chief Minister is very obviously trying to cover up her lack of action over the last three and a half years.

ENDS