4th May 2005

Labor Government Plays Teachers for Fools on EBA

At Question Time in Parliament today, the Shadow Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Dr Richard Lim, asked the Minister to explain where the funding for the now to be settled teachers’ EBA is coming from.

“I have not been able to identify any allocation in the 2005-06 Budget just delivered by the Labor Government to fund the soon to be settled teachers’ enterprise bargaining agreement,” Dr Lim said.

“In setting the Budget, the Minister had not made any allocation for the teachers’ EBA, even though he has known that it will be needed in this cycle of the Budget.

“He obviously knew about it because in an interview with a local newspaper, before the Budget was tabled, the Minister said that the EBA will cost $70m.

“Now he tells us, in response to my question in Parliament today, that it will be $55m. So which is correct?

“Six weeks ago, when the Country Liberal Party offered teachers the 15% wage rise, the Minister lampooned the offer, saying that it was unaffordable and the Office of Public Employment said that it will send us broke.

“Today, the Minister said that his offer to teachers to settle the EBA negotiations is a ‘modest amount’. I would not know anyone who would consider $55 million a ‘modest amount’.

“The Minister has to be truthful to Territorians. If it was a modest amount, why did he push Territory teachers to the very edge up to the eve of a Territory election before agreeing to it?

“Why has the Minister treated Territory teachers with so much contempt?”

Ends

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