Jodeen Carney
Leader of the Opposition

Media Release

24th June 2007
189/07

CLARE MARTIN'S SHAME

Now that Australians have had time to consider the Prime Minister's bold plans to attack sexual abuse and dysfunction in Territory communities, the depth of Clare Martin's incompetence can be accurately measured, says Leader of the Opposition, Jodeen Carney.

"In the wake of the Chief Minister's mishandling of allegations of widespread sexual abuse last May, I wrote to her with plan of action," says Ms Carney.

"The plan, delivered in May 2006 contained, among other initiatives:

• Mandatory regular health checks for all children under 16 years of age;
• Tying Centrelink payments with school attendance;
• Use of Australian Federal Police.
• Dismissing any local Government Councils deemed dysfunctional and appointing administrators.
• Declaration of 'areas of operation' to be targeted.

"While the Prime Minister varied some of our proposals, he has adopted others.

"My long-standing wish to see the removal of customary law as a mitigating factor in sentencing, rejected 3 times by the Martin Government, will finally be achieved'.

"Minister Brough indicated he wanted action in the Territory last year, and when the Chief Minister refused to attend the national summit, I warned her in my letter of 19th May 2006 that:

'It is important to note that Minister Brough’s comments have placed him on a somewhat aggressive footing in addressing the situation. Basically, he has said that if he feels that if the Territory doesn’t do something, the Commonwealth will. This could potentially see the Northern Territory’s self-governance, autonomy and our sovereignty compromised...I am concerned that if the Territory is not at the negotiating table when it comes to action by the Federal Government, the Territory will be sidelined; and may lose control over what is happening in our jurisdiction'.


"Last week, when releasing the Report into child sexual abuse, Clare Martin said her Government will be judged by how she handled the issue.

"Her legacy is that she failed to act and the Commonwealth Government now will take control. Once again, Clare Martin has embarrassed herself, her Party and her Government. It is to her eternal shame."

To arrange further comment: Greg Charter 04000 14059