Chamber of Commerce Report NT –
confident outlook but not all good news

The CLP Opposition welcomes the Chamber of Commerce report that Territory business has a confident outlook for the upcoming quarter.

It is the confidence and resilience of Territory small business operators that has endured through challenging times.

Opposition Treasurer Terry Mills said that the report is not all good news.

Mr Mills said, “A careful analysis of the Chamber’s report reveals underlying trends that require immediate attention by the Labor Government. The drop in national and regional economic indices is a concern, so too is the falling sales revenue, exports and profitability.

“The cost of doing business in the Territory is rising. Higher than predicted inflation increasing by 2.6% over the past year is a worrying trend that Labor is ignoring. This figure is now above the national average of 2.5% and is the third highest rate in the nation.

“Increased labour costs are an issue the Labor Government fails to comprehend. Indeed, the Treasurer proudly proclaimed in Parliament ‘that you cannot get a plumber, carpenter, cabinetmaker, electricians or airconditioning fitters’. He fails to understand that his inability to tackle the skill shortage in the Territory is the main cause for increasing labour costs!

“These factors that will continue to place a particular negative impact the Territory economy and must be addressed.

“The Territory now carries record net debt rising from $1.58b in 2000/01 to $1.78 in 2007/08 under Labor. Fiscal policy must ensure that local small medium enterprises are protected from the long term risk of high debt if there is an economic slow down.”