December 1 2005.

$50 million transfer to deceive Territorians

Fifty million dollars was transferred into a Government department to cover up the fact that spending on indigenous infrastructure and housing services had been more than double the allocated budget – an overspend of $44 million, according to Opposition Leader Jodeen Carney.

Ms Carney said the Government had tried to deceive Territorians, hiding this massive overspend on indigenous infrastructure and housing by injecting the money into another section of the Department of Community Development – the Arts and Museums section.

The *Annual Report of the Department of Community Development, Sport and Cultural Affairs* was tabled yesterday on the second-last Sitting day of Parliament this year and reported that Arts and Museums spent $35 million last year but posted overall income of $85 million, indicating a surplus of about $50 million. (*The relevant pages of the Annual Report are attached.*)

Ms Carney said the report raised further serious concerns about the Government’s budgetary management and its honesty.

“According to the *Annual Report*, Arts and Museums outperformed the most successful private corporations in the world many times over. Its surplus relative to expenditure makes it one of the most profitable organisations in Australia today,” Ms Carney said.

“Or the budget books are deceitful.

“The fact is that the Department of Community Development as a whole blew its original appropriation by $37 million and by parking money in a small section of the department they have tried to mask that fact. Now the department’s books show a small surplus when they never should have.

“This is deceitful book keeping at its worst and it is appears deliberately designed to cover up the government’s budgetary problems. We cannot trust this Treasurer and by tabling this *Annual Report* on the second last sitting day of the year they were hoping no one would notice.”

Media Contact: Julian Swinstead - Email: julian.swinstead@nt.gov.au - Ph: 08 8901 4181 (m) 0429 806 669