11th May 2007

GETTING SOME RELIEF FOR TEACHERS

The Territory Opposition is concerned by media reports that teachers are being forced to teach when sick because public schools have insufficient funds to employ relief teachers.

“Teachers are paid to pass on knowledge, not the flu,” says Terry Mills, Shadow Minister for Education.

“I am also very concerned by reports that the Department of Education is making schools wait far too long for reimbursement for employing relief teachers.

“Rather than supporting the front line delivery of education, which is kids in class rooms, it appears the back room operators have been allowed see themselves as the main game.

“This type of bureaucratic penny pinching indicates the Minister has been captured by his Department.

“To show that the Member for Wanguri is more than the Minister for the Department, he must act swiftly to ensure that the needs of teachers and students have a higher priority than the administrative requirements of the Department.

“Unlike Labor, the CLP does not support a centralist approach to the provision of education in the Territory and will place greater emphasis on local school communities in the decision making process.

“That’s why our recent policy announcements delivered funding directly to schools and boosted support for school councils.

“It is important to demonstrate support for those on the front line.

“Of course there are necessary accountability requirements but these should be attended to in a manner that does not distract from effective education delivery.

“The real business of education occurs in the classroom.

“I call upon the Minister to ensure that schools employing relief teachers are reimbursed in a timely manner so that the important business of education receives the value it deserves.”

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594