During the current sittings of the Parliament the Treasurer, Syd Stirling, tabled two documents without offering explanation as to their budgetary impact. The documents outlined the Transfer of Allocations within the budget and a Treasurer’s Advance.

“Notably the transfer of allocations moved $31.3 million out of the “Treasurer’s Advance” in the Central Holding Authority. This fund can be used as the Treasurer’s piggy bank in case of cost over runs during the year. The other document was an approval given by the Administrator for a further $64.8 million to be added to the Treasurer’s Advance so that the Treasurer could meet unbudgeted cost overruns incurred by Government.” Shadow Treasurer Terry Mills said today.

“When Parliament passed the budget last financial year the Treasurer was given an extra $30 million in case of those unforeseeable expenses that Government’s incur from time to time. In one fell swoop he has told parliament that he has drained that bucket of $31.2 million (more than the allocation) and then dropped a further amount of $64.8 million into the mix. That makes a total $96 million more than Government intended to spend.

“Surely Territorians deserve an explanation as to why the Treasurer needs an extra $96 million to see him through the financial year. It probably means that Government Departments have not lived within their means or that Cabinet had decided on new spending that was not in the original budget. Either way Syd owes Territorians an explanation.

“He didn’t utter a single syllable as to why this was and he certainly didn’t mention the need for this money in his budget speech last month.

“With spending out of control and debt set to reach $4 billion by 2008 there is genuine cause for concern. This Government has been awash with GST revenue and increased own source revenue. Rather than stick within its budgets it has taken every opportunity to spend that money as soon as it comes in.

“When money flows you either spend like there’s no tomorrow or focus on strengthening your business for the lean times. Government strategy is too much of the former and too little of the latter. The blow out in public sector wages is evidence of this.”

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