FAY MILLER
SHADOW MINISTER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

MEDIA RELEASE

26th April 2007

STUDENTS STRANDED BY GOVERNMENT

The Territory Opposition is demanding the Martin Government act immediately to end the situation where students are being left on the side of the road because school buses are full to capacity.

"Having created the absurd situation of senior secondary students needing to travel from Palmerston to either Darwin or Casuarina High to attend classes, there is no excuse for not having enough seats on the bus to get them there," says Fay Miller, Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport.

"By leaving students stranded at the side of the road the Government has breached its duty of care on this, and would legally be wide open if something went wrong.

*An overnight audit of student numbers and bus seat capacity is the obvious first step on this issue.

*Matching the number of students with the number of seats on the school buses is a relatively simple exercise in arithmetic that shouldn't be beyond the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Delia Lawrie, to organise.

*What this shambles highlights, is the Government's claims of good planning on the implementation of Middle Schooling are bogus.

Just two days ago, the Minister issued a media release claiming "Strong forward planning managed the transport needs for students moving to the Middle School model at the start of this school year".

"Leaving young and potentially vulnerable students stuck at the side of the road is hardly managing the transport needs of students," says Mrs Miller.

*Rather than announcing new buses for next year, the Minister should be concentrating on getting kids to school on time now. Our children should not be put at risk by the Martin Government for the remaining 8 months of this year.

*If that means putting on more buses then that must happen now.
"There is no excuse for the Government being responsible for kids not making class on time."

Further comment: Fay Miller 0407 720 511