 Territory Labor Leader, Maggie Hickey, welcomes calls from the Federal Labor Leader for a Commonwealth financial commitment to the completion of the north-south rail link.

“This has long been Territory Labor policy.”

“In a major debate in 1993 on the Australia Asia Trade Link, the former Member for Stuart (Mr Ede) told the Legislative Assembly:

‘... by definition, private investors cannot capture external benefits in their pricing structure.

Some of the benefits that are external to a private investor can be captured by government and some, such as reduced emission of atmospheric pollutants, flow directly to society at large.

A hybrid mix of government and private funding of the project is justified because of this mix of private and public benefits.’

“Yes that occasion, Territory Labor policy was supported by the Minister for the Railway, who said:

‘We cannot attract commercial investors to this project because they cannot capture the benefits - the military benefits, the reduction in maintenance costs of the Stuart Highway, the environmental benefits etc. These are to be captured by the Commonwealth.’

“In fact, the Northern Territory Acceptance Act of 1910 binds the Commonwealth to securing the construction of a rail link between Darwin and Port Augusta.”

“A direct injection of Commonwealth assistance would greatly enhance the prospects of securing private investment in the balance of the funds required.”

2 November 1996  Contact: Maggie Hickey 0419 841 819 or John Tobin 015 610 788

Your Team, Working for the Territory