MARTIN GOVERNMENT FAILS READIN, WRITIN, COUNTIN

The Martin Government’s education policies are failing too many primary school students, says the Territory opposition.

“The latest reading, writing and numeracy achievement tests confirm a pattern of stalled or declining education outcomes for primary school students under the Martin Government,” says Terry Mills, Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

“The test results for Indigenous children in primary school are particularly alarming with many already poor results declining even further during the past 4 years.

“The fall in education outcomes are not confined to Indigenous students with writing achievement falling sharply across the board for non-Indigenous students.

“The fact writing achievement for non-Indigenous Year 7s has declined from 90.2% in 2002 to just 78.9% in 2006, indicates a lack of government responsiveness to the problem.

“That fact these poor results have occurred whilst the Education Department’s budget has increased from $513 million in 2002-03 to $649 million in 2006-07 shows the problem is greater than a lack of resources.

“The Territory uses an approach to curriculum described as an Outcomes Based Approach, an approach abandoned by comparable countries as a failure long ago.

“We need is discard this one time fashionable education theory and replace it with a more traditional standards based approach.

“A syllabus based approach will give teachers more time to focus on students.

“Primary school teachers’ efforts are being undermined by a cluttered curriculum and there should be a cleanout of the many unnecessary burdens upon their time.

“Few parents understand the gobbledegook in school reports.

“A standards based approach will allow for plain reporting.

“Our kids are as capable as any other but until there is a return to a syllabus detailing what should be taught and a uniform marking system, many students will struggle unnecessarily.”

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594