HENDERSON BACKS ‘CRUEL FARCE’ AND BURNS HEALTH MINISTER

News that the Chief Minister, Paul Henderson, has finally recognised the need to begin planning for a hospital at Palmerston highlights a Government in disarray.

"When the Country Liberals proposed a hospital for Palmerston at the recent election the Health Minister Chris Burns called it a ‘cruel farce’," says Kezia Purick, Acting Opposition Leader.

"Just 3 months later the Chief Minister has done a startling backflip and endorsed the Country Liberals election policy of constructing a hospital in Palmerston.

"In doing so the Chief Minister has humiliated his out of touch and out of ideas Health Minister, Chris Burns.

"The rapid growth of Darwin, Palmerston and the rural area in the next decade will result in patient gridlock at Royal Darwin Hospital unless action is taken to ease the pressure.

"With most of the projected population growth around Darwin set to happen in Palmerston and the rural area the case for a new hospital in Palmerston is sound.

"In another backflip the Treasurer, Delia Lawrie, has also admitted the Territory Government’s budget will be plunged at least $50 million into the red by falling GST revenue.

"Labor’s spending spree on recurrent expenditure during the last 8 years has left the Territory laden with debt and vulnerable to falling revenue.

"Had the Labor Government’s adopted a more prudent approach it would have been better placed to weather the world financial storm.

"Because Labor has consistently over-spent during boom times it has failed to drive down debt and provide a buffer against hard times.

"The Treasurer must detail exactly where spending will be cut to accommodate this shortfall in expected revenues."

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