Kezia Purick  
Deputy Opposition Leader  
Media Release  
8th May 2009  

NO BELT TIGHTENING FOR CHIEF MINISTER

The Territory budget papers reveal that the Chief Minister is intending to add another 33 staff to his already bloated Department, says the Territory Opposition.

“In a year when the Labor Government is delivering a $200 million budget black-hole the Chief Minister is increasing his Department’s staff allocation from 271 to 304,” says Kezia Purick, Deputy Opposition Leader.

“This staggering 12% increase in staffing levels in the Chief Minister’s Department comes at the same time the Labor Government is slashing funding to Child Protection Services, Alcohol and Other Drug Services and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Services.

“The decision to slash funding to these 3 key services indicates just how hollow the Henderson Government’s rhetoric is.

“Child Protection Services will get $486,000 less next year – about the same amount of money the Chief Minister will spend putting the failed Labor candidate for Katherine in a taxpayer funded ALP workshop in Katherine.

“The Chief Minister is wasting even more money in his decision to gift James Burke, the former Labor Member for Brennan, a position in another taxpayer funded ALP workshop in Palmerston.

“Getting rid of both these political offices would save about the same amount as the $1.3 million that is being stripped from Alcohol and Other Drug Services.

“Given the Chief Minister repeatedly talks about the severe problems created by alcohol abuse, to slash funding to alcohol services reeks of hypocrisy.

“Hypocritical is also the best way to describe the Chief Minister’s decision to strip $3.4 million out of the budget for Family Violence and Sexual Assault Services.
“In February this year the Chief Minister told Parliament – It is unacceptable that women have to suffer domestic violence across the Territory. It is unacceptable that children have to witness domestic violence across the Northern Territory.

“Apparently it’s more acceptable now the Chief Minister needs to bolster his flagging Government by setting up taxpayer funded branches of the ALP in Palmerston and Katherine.”

Further comment: Kezia Purick 0407 035 976