Opposition Leader Terry Mills has challenged the Chief Minister to put some flesh on the bones of his Territory 2030 vision statement.

Mr Mills said aspirational goals are important, but what is needed is for the Henderson Government to describe how it will achieve these goals.

Mr Mills said the Chief Minister should detail how his Territory 2030 statement would equip the Territory in the event of a major investor considering to establishing a plant here.

“The test comes when an opportunity presents, such as a multi-national coming to the Territory, presenting a situation where we should have already identified a location other than Darwin Harbour,” Mr Mills said.

“That’s the practical response to an aspiration – a response we have not had from Labor for 8 years.

“In the absence of a response, then the aspiration becomes a fiction.

“This should be the challenge for Territory 2030 and the Chief Minister.

“The strategic plan should provide a firm basis upon which the Territory can plan for growth and a mechanism to provide certainty for organisations looking to establish in the Territory.

“This is an opportunity to showcase the capacity of Territory 2030 as a device for tackling the many issues that face Government now and into the future.”

Mr Mills said he was intrigued to notice that page 9 of the 2030 overview says:

*Imagine the Territory without the Alice Springs to Darwin railway, no convention centres in Alice Springs and Darwin and no gas pipeline powering Darwin’s gas-fired power station.*

“Aside from the fact three out of four of those projects were driven by the Country Liberals, it’s telling there are no similar visionary projects in Strategy 2030,” Mr Mills said.
“The Palmerston Hospital plan was first conceived by the Country Liberals during the 2008 election campaign; there's a vague reference to the development of a light rail network for the Top End with no time frames and there's a bunch of aspirational statements that should be the focus of Government without the requirement of a steering committee to do the work for it.

“There is in fact an absolute absence of strategic vision in this plan for something as vital as Darwin Harbour and East Arm Port.”

Mr Mills said there are other fundamental flaws in the plan.

“There is enormous pain across the Territory caused by the housing crisis and the report references a balanced housing market and the Territory becoming Australia's most affordable housing market,” Mr Mills said.

“While these are all worthy aspirations, it confirms our view the Government’s had its eye off the ball for the past 8 years.

“The plan also targets a 50% increase in domestic and international aviation passengers by 2014 – but at no point does it identify how the airport’s capacity will be expanded to meet this anticipated demand.

“This Government monumentally failed to attract the support of the Commonwealth to expand the Airport’s facilities in the Federal Budget. “

Mr Mills said he hopes the aspirations behind Territory 2030 don't go the same way as Clare Martin’s vision for Darwin – which has been largely shelved since she was dumped by Paul Henderson.“

Further comment: Terry Mills 0418 833 594