12 December 2013

CHANDLER CRUSHES SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS

Shadow Education Minister Natasha Fyles today called on the CLP Government to continue funding programs that are successfully supporting young Indigenous women to complete their schooling.

Ms Fyles said programs such as Girls Academy and GEMS are critical in supporting young women to graduate yet the NT Government would not commit to funding the programs into the future.

“We have just seen the first 2 girls from Gunbalanya graduate Year 12 from West Arnhem College, thanks to a great school, teachers and supports such as Girls Academy,” she said.

“In total five young Indigenous women have graduated this year from West Arnhem, joining other Girls Academy graduates from Palmerston and Centralian Senior College.

“There are also 11 young women graduating from Casuarina Secondary College supported by the GEMS program.

“We should be supporting these successes but we know GEMS is under threat from the CLP Government’s education cuts and the future for Girls Academy is uncertain.

“I call on Education Minister Peter Chandler to recommit support and funding to the Girls Academy program.

“It is disappointing and disgraceful that instead of celebrating the achievements of these five young women the CLP Government continues to cut teachers and programs that support the retention of Indigenous girls at school.”
“Minister Chandler should be supporting successes in our schools, not cutting back on the very programs and supports that help our students achieve.”

Ms Fyles said the CLP Government’s teacher cuts will directly impact on the future options and support available for girls like those graduating from West Arnhem College.

“I understand the local member was due to visit Oenpelli this week to discuss the local impact of the education cutbacks – a little too late since I understand many contract teachers have made relocation arrangements after being told there was no job for them in 2014.

“We are in the last few days of school for 2013 and many Territory parents, teachers and students still don’t know what teachers they will have available next year and how this will impact on classrooms and curriculum.

“Minister Chandler needs to come clean, release the real figures on the school by school staffing breakdown and explain to Territorians why we are losing around 140 teachers from our schools.”

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