The Labor Government is still trying to con Territorians about the amount of money it is receiving from the GST windfall.

"How can anyone believe Labor Treasurer Syd Stirling when he claims the Territory is suffering a shortfall of $20 million," CLP Leader Terry Mills said today.

The facts are simple: in his Budget last year Syd Stirling said he expected to get $1592 million from the GST in 2003-04, instead he is getting an extra $92 million on top of that.

In his own Budget he said he expected to get $1642.8 million in 2004-05 and instead he is now going to get $1678.7 million - an increase of $35.9 million.

"With Syd in charge of the economic management of the Territory and his demonstrated inability to recognise an increase in funding when he sees one, is it any wonder the economy is in the doldrums," Mr Mills said.

"He is either an incredibly incompetent Treasurer or he is trying to pull the wool over the eyes of Territorians."

Mr Mills said he hoped that the Labor Government would use the bonus from the GST to help Territorians when it delivers its Budget next week.

"There are very clear ways that this Government can use this money to stimulate the economy and get the Territory back on track. For starters he could take a leaf out of the Federal Government's book by implementing tax reform."

Mr Mills said Territorians should remember that Mr Stirling and his Labor Party had opposed the GST.

"If they had been successful then the Territory would only be looking at receiving funding from the Federal Government of $1578 million in 2004-05. Instead the Territory will get an extra $100 million - all thanks to the GST revenue stream that goes directly to the States and Territories.

"Mr Stirling says that the Territory is only getting its fair share, so it's a pity he cannot convince his Labor colleagues in Victoria and New South Wales that that
is the case because they want to change the system," Mr Mills said.

"The greatest fear we face is that if Labor is elected federally they will control all the governments in Australia and will be able to change the GST system," Mr Mills said.

Highlights for the Territory in the Federal Budget include:

- NT Government will receive an extra $92.2 million in GST revenue this year compared with what it expected in its 2003-04 Budget.
- In 2004-05 it will receive an estimated $1.678 billion in GST revenue compared to its expectations of $1.642 billion.
- $102.4 million out of a total Australia-wide program of $300 million will be spent on Defence facilities in the Territory compared with $33 million in 2003-04.
- A extra $18 million will be spent on maintaining the Defence estate in the Territory in 2004-05.
- The Territory will share in the $356.5 million to be spent on better accommodation for Defence personnel including a rent assistance scheme to enable Defence Force members without dependants to live off base.
- The Territory will be funded for an extra 55 aged care places.
- The Youth Diversionary program and Aboriginal Interpreter service funding has been extended for another year at a cost of $3.9 million with negotiating to continue on extending the scheme further.
- Darwin will be the base for a dedicated high-speed search and rescue aircraft as part of a four year $18.9 million search and rescue package.
- There's an extra $6 million taking Federal funding for Territory Government schools to $80.5 million – an 8.1% increase. There are also additional funds for indigenous education.
- Funding for 100 VET places.
- $29.8 million for regional migration measures to encourage people to settle in regional areas such as the Territory.
- $54.2 million for NT roads and more to come under AusLink. Projects include a bridge across the Palmer River and improvements on the Stuart, Barkly and Victoria Highways. Plus there will be additional funds for the Roads to Recovery program.
- An offshore petroleum exploration incentive will be applied to an area of the North Bonaparte Basin in the Timor Sea.
- An extra $3 million will be spent to deter illegal fishing in northern waters.

Ends