The Northern Territory will be better off under a Latham Labor Government, Chief Minister Clare Martin said today.

“The Federal Labor Opposition is committed to providing opportunities for everyone in the Northern Territory through better education and training, a strong health system, tax relief and other incentives for families, and support for local business,” Ms Martin said.

Under a Federal Labor Government, the Northern Territory will benefit from:

- More resources for hospitals, as well as a Medicare hot spot team at Royal Darwin Hospital to help provide after hours GP services; a new Medicare office in Palmerston; and new initiatives to increase the number of doctors in rural and regional areas.

- A healthier Medicare system, which will see an increase in bulk billing incentives so more Territorians get to see a doctor for less money.

- A $300 million dental care program across Australia, meaning better access to dental services in the Territory.

- 400 extra aged care places in the Territory.

- More child care places for working Territory families and a free day of care a week for four year olds.

- More resources for every single school in the Northern Territory through Federal Labor’s $2.4 billion Great Australian Schools Plan which will ensure funding decisions are based on need, rather than allowing wealthy southern schools to get more than their fair share.

- Better access to training and skilling opportunities for Territorians, with Labor committing to at least 400 extra TAFE and training places in the Territory.

- Extra university places and more resources for Charles Darwin University. Labor will also put an end to 25% HECS hikes.

- $20 million towards the establishment of a bio-terrorism research facility in Darwin.

- A renewed focus on the development needs of Northern Australia, with the establishment of an office of Northern Australia.

- The establishment of a gas energy task force to work with the Office of Northern Australia.

- More support for Territory business under the DIDS contract for the entire eight years of the contract – not just the two year
moratorium belatedly offered by the Federal Government.

- Local defence personnel will be better off with a range of initiatives including:
  - Increased air travel and a lifting of the restriction on private travel to places like Bali;
  - Defence personnel based in Darwin and Palmerston, as well as their dependents, will have the costs of travel to any capital city covered – not just Adelaide.
  - 200 new off-base accommodation places will be created for single ADF personnel in Darwin and Palmerston.

- Boosts to Territory infrastructure including:
  - $20 million for roads, including upgrading the Victoria River Highway and widening sections of the Stuart Highway
  - $13.7 million to upgrade Tiger Brennan Drive and Berrimah Road
  - $19 million extra for roads on unincorporated land
  - Gifting Myilly Point Houses to the national trust
  - Boosting security in Darwin Harbour, with $2 million for a radar-based vessel tracking system.

“These initiatives are proof that the Territory will be better off under Labor,” Ms Martin said.

“Claims to the contrary by the CLP Opposition are nothing more than desperate scaremongering in the lead-up to the Federal election on Saturday.

“What makes their claims even more nonsensical is the fact that the CLP Opposition was completely silent earlier this year when their Howard Government colleagues allowed the Grants Commission to rip $48 million a year off the Territory.

“They know the Territory will be better off under a Latham Labor Government and are desperately trying to hoodwink Territorians on behalf of their federal colleagues.”