GOVERNMENT UNVEILS $42 MILLION PLAN TO BUILD BETTER SCHOOLS

The Martin Government is investing an extra $42 million over four years to improve secondary education in the Territory and build better schools, Employment, Education and Training Minister Syd Stirling announced today.

Mr. Stirling said the investment would see greater funds to support students in achieving better results, more teachers in schools; a school counsellor for every secondary school; more funding for Vocational Education and Training; a new leading edge distance education service; stronger support for indigenous secondary students and stronger school communities.

The $42 million plan follows on from a review of secondary education in the Territory led by Dr Gregor Ramsey and extensive public consultation throughout 2004.

“The Government has accepted most of the review’s recommendations, with implementation of some initiatives to begin immediately,” Mr Stirling said. “We have rejected their recommendation to close the NT Open Education Centre. Nor will we be implementing Learning Precincts or a Quality Service Agency, both of which would lead to more administration instead of putting funds towards students.

“We have agreed with the reports recommendations that we need to better engage 11 to 14 year olds in their education. How we do that will be the subject of extensive community discussion throughout 2005.”

Mr. Stirling said the Government’s $42 million plan for Territory schools comes on top of a broad range of education initiatives already implemented by the Government, including employing 100 extra teachers in Territory schools.

“We are ensuring our schools are equipped to meet the changing needs of students so they have the knowledge and skills to make a personal and professional contribution to the Territory community.

“This $42 million plan builds on the good educational foundations provided by our local primary schools. Quality primary schools in local areas are one of the great benefits of living in the Territory and we remain strongly committed to each of these schools. Territorians can be assured that all existing schools will remain and there will be no school closures.

“Our $42 million plan will allow us to significantly improve secondary education, build better schools and keep the Territory moving ahead.”

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