17th August 2005

**Labor’s Failure to Retain Teachers**

Teachers are leaving Territory classrooms at unacceptable and increasing levels. The Labor Government’s claim that their strong focus on teacher retention is paying off is untrue.

Opposition Spokesman for Education Terry Mills said that 63 teachers had to be recruited for the second semester this year. This is almost double the number that had to be recruited a year ago and 41 more than two years ago.

Mr Mills said, “Despite assurances from Minister Stirling, the Labor government is failing to attract and retain teachers in the Territory. This may be a problem for the Minister but I am far more concerned about how this impacts on students."

“Of particular concern is the impact short-term teachers attracted under the ‘teach for a term’ scheme have on students. Parents often complain about the effect of high turn-over on students. Education outcomes are strengthened when the relationship between students is allowed to mature. The ‘teach for a term’ scheme is a short term fix with limited educational benefit.

“A better approach is to follow the suggestion to attract teachers in mid career in countries like the UK and offer a two year bond before relocation costs are reimbursed.

“The Government introduced the ‘teach for a term’ offer that included airfares for teachers in October 2004. The Minister was unable to reveal how much this scheme costs Territorians in Question Time today.

“What ever the cost, the real cost is being experienced by young Territorians in our class rooms.”