



GARY HIGGINS
OPPOSITION LEADER

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For immediate circulation

BLOW OUT 2018 – pathway to insolvency continues

The Leader of the Opposition today presented his reply to the reckless and foolhardy budget presented to Territorians yesterday.

Leader of the Opposition, Gary Higgins described the budget as a pathway to insolvency and a budget that would leave Territorians in debt for decades.

“The Northern Territory should be the place of world class opportunity, not home to decades of debt and disadvantage.

“Territory Labor has delivered a textbook lesson in waste and wasted opportunity, at the expense of Territorians and future generations.

“The Labor government has made no real effort to cut irresponsible spending, no effort to make any savings and above all else, Labor has spent too long doing nothing, to the detriment of business confidence and opportunity.

“I also note, the Treasurer continues to mislead Territorians on the amount of GST funding provided to the Northern Territory.

“In stark contrast, I continue to work with the Federal government to maximise funding for the benefit of all Territorians and I again acknowledge, the top up funding of \$259 million recently announced by the Federal Treasurer.

Further reiterating the Labor government’s epic economic failures, today in Parliament, the Treasurer was forced to admit that there was an embarrassing error in her budget documents.

“The much lauded undergrounding powerlines project, which the Opposition commenced calls for in the aftermath of Cyclone Marcus, has been itemised (*Budget Paper 2, page 13*) and accounted for, at the expense (and offset) of the much needed remote housing package, an investment package provided by the Commonwealth government.

Capital commitments

Capital commitments increased by \$89 million across the budget cycle, primarily related to:

- additional funding of \$65.3 million from 2017-18 to 2021-22 to develop and implement a new information management system, as part of the response to the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, to improve service coordination across the child protection and youth justice system
- \$5 million in 2017-18 and \$10 million ongoing from 2018-19 for undergrounding of powerlines, offset by
- redirected funding totalling \$32.1 million from 2018-19 to 2020-21 and \$8.5 million ongoing from 2021-22 to support the operational program management requirements of the Remote Housing Investment Package.

ABOVE: Labor government issued budget paper references removal of funds from remote housing to pay for undergrounding of powerlines.

“In addition, the Opposition notes the very lacklustre spend on remote and regional infrastructure including just \$37.5 million in new works for roads in regional Northern Territory. The remainder of the \$630 million figure were re-announcements or carry-over works.

“Roads are an enabler for Territorians and communities, including some of our most disadvantaged and remote Territorians,” said Mr Higgins.

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Media contact: Georgina Murphy 0432 679 567