

16 October 2008

## **SESELJA MUST SET RECORD STRAIGHT ON JOB CUTS**

Chief Minister Jon Stanhope has called on the ACT Liberal Leader Mr Zed Seselja to clarify how he can slash spending in a future ACT Budget without cutting around 200 jobs in the public service.

"Today, two days out from an election, the Liberal leader has dragged a senior public servant into the fray, claiming the Under Treasurer, Ms Megan Smithies, had told him job losses would not result from their massive spending cuts," Mr Stanhope said.

"This is a low act. The Liberals have politicised a senior and highly-experienced public servant in what can only be described as a desperate bid for votes.

"The Under Treasurer has now confirmed in writing that the claims made repeatedly in the media by Mr Seselja for the past 24 hours are not true." Mr Stanhope said.

Late yesterday and again on Canberra's morning radio today, Mr Seselja said.

*"No one will be sacked as a result of this and Treasury confirmed that."* – Zed Seselja (ABC 666 Interview 5.15pm – Wednesday 15 October)

Further...

*"We have a plan, fully costed by Treasury, which says that we'll keep the budget in surplus and not one job will be lost."* – Zed Seselja (2CC Interview, 7.15am – Thursday 16 October)

And...

*"Treasury has said we can afford all of our promises, we will keep the Budget in a strong surplus and there will be no job losses as a result."* – Zed Seselja (2CC/2CA News 8.00am – Thursday 16 October)

As a result of these statements, the Under Treasurer, Ms Smithies, has written to me stating the following:

*"I understand the press is reporting today that the Leader of the Opposition has stated that in some way I, as part of the costings exercise, provided advice to him that there will be no job cuts from the Liberal Party savings measures. You have asked if I provided any such advice. I can confirm that I had no discussion with the Leader of the Opposition or his Office on the issue of job cuts."*

"We now have clear evidence of the level of deception that the Liberals will go to in their desperate win-at-all-costs bid to secure votes," Mr Stanhope said.

## Media release

“In light of the clear denial by the Under Treasurer that the Treasury had, as claimed by Mr Seselja, provided advice to the Liberal Party on job cuts, Mr Seselja must come clean and tell the truth.

“He must publicly apologise to Treasury officials immediately - and be honest and up-front with Canberra’s voters – that the Liberals have no choice but to sack a large number of public servants this financial year, and beyond, to keep the Territory’s budget in the black.” Mr Stanhope said.

The public service union has claimed as many as 250 jobs might be lost as a result of the Liberals slash and burn approach to future budgeting.

Statement Ends

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