

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Mr Wood

to Minister for Employment, Education and Training

Mitchell Centre accommodation for Education Department

\$3.7 million was allocated this year for fitting out five floors of the Mitchell Centre so that the Education Department can be centralised in one building –

- (a) what does that money pay for;
- (b) does this include desks and chairs or is that cost to be revealed later;
- (c) what is the advantage in financial terms of spending \$3.7 million to put the department in one building; and
- (d) would this money have been better spent on school infrastructure?

ANSWER

- (a) In 2002-03 the Northern Territory Government approved \$3.75 million from the Capital Works Program for DEET to consolidate most of its head office accommodation in the new Mitchell Centre. The project included the fit out of five floors and encompassed all the Information Technology (IT), communications, relocation and other associated works. The Developer provided a contribution of \$0.725 million towards the fit out cost.
- (b) The majority of office furniture was reused and any new furniture required was included in the project cost.
- (c) DEET's Head Office functions do not operate out of one building. Prior to taking space in the Mitchell Centre, the Department occupied space in seven separate CBD buildings and one school. Three of the seven CBD buildings have housed the previous Department of Education Head Office for many years in old, sub-standard accommodation. DEET now occupies space on five floors of the Mitchell Centre and two other CBD buildings of acceptable standard. The move has improved co-ordination within DEET and in the delivery of its services to the public, and some administrative efficiencies have been achieved. The NT economy has also benefited through government support of the construction/realty industry.

- (d) It would have been preferable to be able to spend the budget for the fit-out and move on employment, education and training programs, however public servants need to be accommodated appropriately. Education staff had been in sub-standard accommodation for many years.