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Release date: 13 September 2010

SHAMELESS USE OF DODGY DATA

The Henderson Government should explain why it used misleading data to justify its decision to scrap bilingual education in Territory schools.

Shadow Education Minister, Terry Mills, says a paper presented by Charles Darwin University academic Brian Devlin highlights serious anomalies in the rationale Labor used to abandon its bilingual policy.

"The My School website clearly shows bi-lingual education was achieving better outcomes for Indigenous students in key areas of literacy and numeracy at certain levels than the non-bilingual program," Mr Mills said.

"Evidence presented by Dr Devlin shows bilingual students achieved better outcomes than non-bilingual students in Year 3 spelling and numeracy, Year 7 numeracy and Year 9 grammar and punctuation.

"This is in contrast to the selective evidence tabled by the Henderson Government in Parliament in 2008 to justify scrapping bilingual education.

"The Government announced the changes as a distraction for the embattled former Education Minister Marion Scrymgour, who had been caught out misleading Territorians about her decision to sack Departmental CEO Margaret Banks.

"The policy should never have been scrapped and Indigenous students are paying the price."

Mr Mills said Territory Labor Senator Trish Crossin supported the Country Liberals in calling for the return of a bilingual education stream.

"I support her view that the best way to learn to read and write English is to start off in your own language.

"This will establish an understanding of a second language in the early years and help build a bridge between the first language and English.

"Learning is moving from the known to the unknown.

"Education Minister Chris Burns should meet with Dr Devlin at the earliest possible time for a briefing that cuts through the shameless spin that Labor used to justify dumping this important policy."