



Clare Martin
CHIEF MINISTER



31 January 2006

THEY'RE BACK - STUDENTS RETURN TO SCHOOL

Some 42,000 students will begin arriving in classrooms across the Territory today as schools gear up for the start of the 2006 school year.

Chief Minister and Acting Employment, Education and Training Minister Clare Martin said more than 28,000 primary and 13,500 secondary students will attend 191 public and independent schools this year.

“In many ways this is the year of education – there’s more money and teachers and we’re going to get schools ready for important changes to middle years,” Ms Martin said.

“The start of a new school year is a busy, exciting time for our students and teaching staff - especially for the thousands starting school for the first time,” she said.

“Our education workforce is experiencing greater stability than ever before with an historically low 6 teacher vacancies across the Territory.

“More teachers are staying in their jobs and it’s been easier to attract replacements for those who leave.

“Keeping children safe at school is also a priority of this Government.

A Territory wide newspaper and radio public awareness campaign will run until the February 10 to encourage parents to make sure their kids use seatbelts, and wear helmets when cycling.

Drivers are also being urged to slow down around schools,” Ms Martin said.

Each year, over 200 children are killed or seriously injured on Australian roads while travelling between home and school (Australian Transport Safety Bureau 2004) which highlights the serious risk.

The weekday speed limit around schools is 40km/h between 7am and 5pm.

Media Contact: Richard O’Leary 0401 119 586

Highlights for education in 2006

- **The start of 19 counsellors to improve social, emotional and educational support for students.**
- **The \$50 back-to-school bonus vouchers. Most schools have received them to distribute to parents to pay for school uniforms, stationary and other equipment as part of a \$2 million election commitment.**
- **Working towards Middle Schools for 2007.**
- **The expansion of the preschool and transition age of entry trial to 21 additional schools.**
- **The continuation of accelerated learning programs.**
- **An increase in the number of Aboriginal students undertaking senior secondary studies in their remote home communities.**