

# Our Indian Ocean Territories

## Coalition Election Statement

"A second-term Howard Coalition Government will continue its policy of securing a greater degree of economic self-sufficiency for Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands," the Member for the NT, Nick Dondas, and Federal Territories Minister Alex Somlyay said today.

"At the same time, the Coalition will continue measures to appropriately streamline the administration of the Indian Ocean Territories.

"The Coalition will also pursue incorporation of the Ashmore & Cartier Islands into the Northern Territory before or at the time of Statehood.

### Labor's Record:

- Under Labor, infrastructure standards in the Indian Ocean Territories were allowed to decline.

### What the Coalition has done:

- The Coalition initiated a rebuilding programme focussing on the maintenance and upgrading of infrastructure in the Indian Ocean Territories.
- The Coalition negotiated a new 21 year mining lease for Christmas Island's phosphate mine.

- The Coalition has committed an additional \$20 million to the Regional Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund to meet the telecommunication needs of remote island communities such as Christmas Island and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands.
- The Coalition is facilitating the development of a satellite launch facility on Christmas Island, consistent with environmental and other assessment procedures.
- The Coalition has maintained air services between the Indian Ocean Territories and mainland Australia following the withdrawal of commercial services.
- The Coalition has taken action to ensure that former employees of the Christmas Island Resort company receive their full redundancy entitlements following the closure of the resort.

"The Coalition will continue to work with the local communities to enhance opportunities for diversification and economic development in the Territories," Mr Dondas said.

"In recognition of the significant economic impact caused by the closure of the Christmas Island Resort, the Coalition will work with the local community and interested and reputable business interests to facilitate the re-opening of the resort."

"The Coalition will continue to ensure that the systems of governance and service delivery in each Territory meets community needs; meets the community's capacity to pay; and is cost-effective and efficient," Mr Somlyay said.

"To this end, despite what Labor candidate Warren Snowdon has asserted, the Coalition has publicly committed to consult with the communities of both Christmas and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands about options for the future, in the light of NT Statehood."

"In addition, the Coalition's Tax Plan will treat the Indian Ocean Territories in a very favourable manner – the GST will not apply in the IOTs, goods and services delivered to the IOTs will be GST-free, and residents will benefit from personal income tax cuts, the Coalition's new family package, and increases in social security

pensions and allowances," they said.

"If Labor is truly interested in building secure and sustainable futures for the Island communities, Mr Snowdon would be joining with the Coalition in a co-operative manner, not attempting to stir up trouble and discontent," Mr Somlyay said.

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