Adam Giles
Shadow Minister for Indigenous Policy

Media Release

4th September 2008

NOT A FAILED STATE : FAILED ECONOMIES

Adam Giles, Country Liberals Indigenous Affairs spokesperson, is urging Senators on the cross-benches to consider the economic reality of most remote indigenous communities before voting on the Federal Government’s legislation to re-instate the permit system.

“It’s misleading to think about remote Aboriginal Australia as a failed state,” says Adam Giles, Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

“It’s more instructive to think about remote Aboriginal communities as failed economies within a prosperous nation.

“One reason remote Aboriginal communities remain mired in economic deprivation is that the permit system has isolated them from the wider Australian economy.

“We should be removing economic barriers that restrict growth and development in communities.

“Economic growth through private sector investment in Indigenous communities will create local jobs; local jobs for local people.

“When the Prime Minister is talking up 50,000 jobs for Indigenous Australians, he obviously isn’t talking about it for the Northern Territory.

“The permit system reinforces the almost universal welfare dependence of many remote communities.

“Without the free flow of goods and people into remote Aboriginal communities there will be no breaking the chain of welfare dependence that binds so many.

“Keeping these communities cut off from the wider society will keep them poor and disadvantaged.

“Nor does the permit system protect remote communities from exploitation.

“The Little Children are Sacred Report exposed the shocking levels of abuse that existed behind the veil of the permit system.

“The permit system has failed in its stated intentions.
“In public policy good intentions are not enough – the actual impact of the policy needs to be carefully assessed.

“Any reasonable assessment of the permit says it has failed and I urge the Senators on the cross-benches to act on that reality and keep these communities open.”

Further comment Adam Giles: 0421 588 118