AUDITORS GENERAL SHOULD PROBE SIHIP

The Country Liberals have called on the Northern Territory and Commonwealth Auditors General to begin an immediate investigation to trace the movement of money under the SIHIP scheme.

Shadow Indigenous Affairs Minister, Adam Giles, said the Federal and Territory Labor governments have failed to adequately address concerns about how much money has been spent so far under the $672million indigenous housing program.

He said Federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Jenny Macklin and the Chief Minister Paul Henderson had also not sufficiently clarified how many houses would be built in Territory communities under the scheme.

Mr Giles said the assertion by Territory Indigenous Affairs Minister Alison Anderson that only 30% of SIHIP money would actually be used to build houses was in stark contrast to Ms Macklin’s assurances that the figure was more likely 70%.

Mr Giles said the Chief Minister’s announcement today that two senior Territory bureaucrats would review how the money’s being spent was the equivalent of putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank.

“The Auditors General would be independent – and at arm’s length from Government.

“They need to clarify exactly how many new houses will be built,” Mr Giles said.
“They should also keep a very close eye on the amount spent administering the scheme, bearing in mind the priority of SIHIP should be building houses and not paying bureaucrats.”

Mr Giles said the Commonwealth had already broken its promise regarding new housing construction in Tennant Creek.

“Under a 99 year lease arrangement signed two years ago, Tennant Creek was supposed to get tens-of-millions for new Indigenous Housing,” Mr Giles said.

“Now, despite a $35million allocation under SIHIP, Labor has decided not to build any new houses in Tennant.

“Fortunately, two new signs have been erected north and south of the town – at an estimated cost of $5000 each – announcing planned repairs and upgrades to existing houses.”

Further comment: Adam Giles 0421 588 118