Rob Knight’s admission that his Government has failed local councils in the implementation of the Tech1 financial software system marks another low point in his time as a Minister.

Opposition Local Government spokesman Willem Westra van Holthe said Mr Knight today apologised to delegates at the Local Government Association NT annual conference in Alice Springs for forcing the system onto shires.

Mr Knight told delegates Tech1 was:

A good system that was put in wrong. I apologise for that, we got it wrong.

“Today’s mea culpa will be cold comfort to those councils that have been labouring under the strains caused by the system over the past year,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“I understand shires across the Northern Territory have been unable to produce accurate financial reports for elected members because of the system’s deficiencies.

“The best it can manage is to produce a skeleton report and then manually manipulate that to represent the true state of the municipality’s finances.

“This has cost shires – and consequently ratepayers – hundreds-of-thousands of dollars in lost productivity and expenses as well as the cost of re-mediating the system which will run into millions of dollars.

Despite the unreserved apology, Mr Knight told conference stakeholders that they’d have to make the best of the system or, as he put it, ‘you’ve got to make it run’.

“This is typical of the arrogance of this incompetent Minister and Government,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“Rob Knight brought this upon shires; he must now bare the entire responsibility for the failure this system has brought to local governments across the Northern Territory.

“A number of shires have written to the Minister asking for an extension of time for the submission of audited annual reports.

“The very least Rob Knight can do is grant an extension since the problem they face is his fault.”

Mr Westra van Holthe said the rushed implementation of the Tech1 system was another significant blunder by the Henderson Government’s most incompetent Minister.

“Over the past year Rob Knight has failed Territorians in areas as diverse as essential services, the cost of power, public housing, Black Tip gas and the construction of houses under SIHIP.

“The Minister should also apologise for those failures.”

Further comment: Willem Westra van Holthe 0414 778 430