Today’s announcement that the Territory and Federal Government’s will draw down future funds to pay for 20 new bureaucratic positions as part of the SIHIP project shines a light on the inherent failures within the scheme.

Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Adam Giles, said the project has been bedeviled by bureaucracy right from the start, which is in part why only two houses have been built in two-and-a-half years.

In addition, there’s also a political imperative. With a Federal election due later this year, Federal Minister Jenny Macklin is determined to achieve the housing targets at any cost.

On this occasion, the cost is the employment of a team of 20 new public servants to monitor the delivery of appropriate housing and the re-direction of Territory Government public housing maintenance funds.

“In mid-2009 we learnt that the best part of $50million had been spent on SIHIP before a house had even been started, and coming up to a year later there’s only been two built,” Mr Giles said.

“While the Commonwealth and Territory governments might welcome the appointment of 20 new bureaucrats to the project, I’d rather more builders and blue-collar tradesman and Indigenous apprentices on the ground in communities.”

Mr Giles said he understands SIHIP’s Darwin base at the Chan Building has more than 88 staff supervising the program.

“Today’s announcement blows out that figure to 108,” he said.

“At the same time, the Commonwealth Government is prepared to spend as much as $450,000 building the equivalent of a one-bedroom unit.

“That’s not value for money for taxpayers. It beggars belief how Jenny Macklin, Paul Henderson and Gerry Wood can support such expenditure which has brought so few houses at such high cost.

“If the Government does achieve its SIHIP targets, it will only be because it’s re-classified its objectives for re-builds and flick-passed the infrastructure component outside the original funding pool.”

Further comment: Adam Giles 0421 588 118