The Country Liberals welcome the celebrations starting today for the National Aborigines and Islander Day Observance Committee or NAIDOC week said Shadow Indigenous Policy spokesman Adam Giles.

“It is an opportunity to celebrate Indigenous culture and this year’s theme – Unsung Heroes – Closing the Gap, is of real relevance” he said.

“The Country Liberals recognise that Closing the Gap is not just about the social outcomes of health and education, but seeking and meeting a long term objective of sustainable development.

“This sustainability should encompass 4 pillars; those of social, environment, economic and cultural development.

“We mustn’t forget” said Mr Giles, “the ‘Gap’ between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people is present across all of the four pillars.”

“It was with this in mind that at the last Territory election we proposed the establishment of a joint office with the Commonwealth to control and deliver services to Indigenous people and in addition, supported greater transparency and fiscal responsibility in the Territory by creating an Indigenous Expenditure Review Committee in Parliament.

“In the last three years social outcomes have got worse with unemployment increasing, access to housing diminishing and education statistics deteriorating.”

However NAIDOC week is the time for celebration of culture.

“The sharing of culture with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians brings about greater knowledge and understanding in the wider community, it allows for greater preservation and investment of culture into the future and most of all it supports bringing us together as one, as a community.”

Speaking from Alice Springs, he said: “I see the Northern Territory as the Indigenous cultural capital of the nation and that Indigenous Centralian’s have preserved and grown their knowledge and culture and have much to teach to others across our vast land.”

“We must never, however, forget about the four pillars.

“Individually we all sit at different points on the scale, we learn from some and teach others, we move forward and we reflect on the past but most importantly NAIDOC is not about politics, it is about celebrating, sustaining and developing our culture.

Further comment: Adam Giles 0421 588 118