Today’s release of the discussion paper into a new intervention into Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory is an admission the Labor Government has failed to improve services for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. “While I support consultation with key stakeholders, a 12 month consultation period is way over the top,” says Shadow Indigenous Affairs Minister, Adam Giles. “Labor has bureaucrats all over the Territory, Government Business Managers in each of the 73 prescribed communities, a Labor Government in power in the Territory with Indigenous bush MLAs and the local Federal Member is a Minister in the Gillard Labor Government. “How much consultation can you have? ”Labor has had oversight of the Intervention for all but five months since its announcement in June 2007, but quality of life improvements for Indigenous Territorians are thin on the ground. “While there have been some improvements in areas such as policing, child nutrition and the availability of healthy food, the Labor Government ripped the heart out of the Coalition’s Intervention. “John Howard and Mal Brough planned a root and branch overhaul of Indigenous communities with a focus on getting children to school, developing economies and transitioning people into jobs, but Labor never fostered job creating investment. “In all significant measures, Labor has failed to make any real progress and today’s announcement is recognition of this failure. “School attendance targets are in tatters, with school attendance rates worse than when the intervention started and 2700 Indigenous school aged children not even enrolled as students. “The Indigenous housing project, SIHIP, is a windfall for bureaucrats and profiteers but is failing to significantly reduce over-crowding or provide shelter for Aboriginal Territorians sleeping rough. “The seat of Lingiari takes in all the Northern Territory’s Intervention zones and local Labor Member, Warren Snowdon, has been in Federal politics for almost 25 years. “The Intervention was a response in part to his failure to properly represent Aboriginal people in his electorate. He has failed to drive economic reform, economic development, create jobs and provide a future for Indigenous Territorians. “The timing of today’s announcement has the hallmarks of a smokescreen to distract from the Commonwealth’s ban on live cattle exports to Indonesia and the fact that more than 400 Indigenous jobs are at risk in the Territory’s pastoral industry. “I’d like to know if the Territory’s Chief Minister, Paul Henderson, knew about this announcement before it was made. “I would have thought that given he was in Canberra today, he would have been present at the Prime Minister’s press conference but then again he was present with the Prime Minister when the live cattle ban was announced and remained silent then too.” Further comment: Adam Giles 0421 588 118