The Henderson Government has again put the interests of Central Australia at the back of its list.

“Labor’s continued neglect of Alice Springs and the centre is reflected in today’s budget,” said Shadow Minister for Regional Development, Adam Giles.

“Previous undelivered commitments that have been rolled over into this budget, include:

• Completing the Alice Springs Emergency Department – despite successive commitments over three budgetary years;
• Remediation work at Alice Springs hospital;
• West Macdonnell Visitor Centre;
• Araluen Centre air-conditioning.

“The Government claims it is addressing the housing crisis in Alice Springs, but this is a long way short of the truth.

“The Government has committed $10 million for headworks at the Arid Zone Research Institute site – but they aren’t expected to begin until April next year – which reflects the project’s low priority status.

“During the Future Planning Forum held in Alice Springs in June 2008, it was detailed that $31 million was needed to facilitate land release at AZRI including $21 million for water supply alone.

“There is also the need to duplicate the road through The Gap to cope with increased traffic flows and schools, but as yet we haven’t seen the reports into traffic flows, nor costings to undertake the duplication let alone money from the budget to make that happen.

“It is ridiculous to believe people will be able to live at the AZRI site during the lifetime of this Government.”

Further comment: Adam Giles 0421 588 118