The Northern Territory Government’s Public and Affordable Housing Minister Chris Burns lost his way today when attempting to attack Country Liberal statements on the SIHIP debacle according to Shadow Indigenous Policy Minister Adam Giles.

“Chris Burns’ rumour mongering and scare tactics about future Country Liberals plans for the remote housing program are but another attempt to deflect attention away from the Henderson Labour government’s woeful delivery of housing under the Commonwealth emergency housing response - SIHIP” Mr Giles said today.

“His claims that a Country Liberals government would roll back on the SIHIP program commitment is a complete falsehood. If anything, a frank and fearless review of the Alliance contracting model and an allocation of funding away from bloated SIHIP administration should decrease the time taken to complete the program, and also deliver a better financial outcome with housing works on the ground.

“Yes” - said Mr Giles - “we would change the program post the current Alliance packages. We would localise the program in the Territory and get houses built with value for money.

“This in contrast to a government that could only claim to have delivered 21 new dwellings since the housing MOU was signed in September 2007, and proposes knocking down, without replacing, hundreds of others.

“Under the previous Coalition government there used to be 60 houses a year built in the Territory, this mob can only manage 7 per year.

“After Cyclone Tracy, government managed to build more than a thousand homes in an emergency, but with the current emergency intervention, the Labor governments at the Territory and Federal level can somehow manage to spend $200M on nothing but a handful of houses.

“SIHIP is the NT model of the $5.5B national partnership agreement on remote indigenous housing. The NT is the only jurisdiction that chose an alliance model” said Mr Giles.

“Chief Minister Paul Henderson has attempted to distance himself from SIHIP but he is the one that holds ultimate responsibility.

“WA is the only jurisdiction to meet their indigenous housing targets of 75, with half of those dwellings being put together in Alice Springs for shipping to remote communities.

“It’s a continuing shame that in the southern region of the Territory not one house has been built in almost three years.

Further comment: Adam Giles 0421 588 118