MEDIA RELEASE

HOMELANDS AND OUTSTATIONS POLICY

March 30th, 2012

The Country Liberals today launched their Homelands and Outstations policy in Maningrida.

Shadow Minister for Indigenous Policy, Adam Giles, said Outstations and Homelands are crucial to the maintenance of traditional culture and quality of life for Aboriginal people.

Mr Giles said the Henderson Labor Government’s policies:

• Force people off country and into urban centres where people often live rough and on the streets
• Minimise opportunities for economic development in regional and remote areas
• Place pressure on public housing in Growth Towns and urban centres
• Reduce quality of life for Aboriginal people and all Territorians

“The Henderson Labor Government’s policies contribute to over-crowding, increase homelessness and have created a culture of alcoholism, violence and anti-social behaviour – particularly in urban centres,” Mr Giles said.

“The Country Liberals are committed to the preservation and maintenance of Homelands and Outstations and will back that up with significant support into the long term.

“There are approximately 2400 dwellings built on Homelands and Outstations in the Territory and these are home to about 10,000 residents.

“They provide a strong link to country and a vital cultural connection.

“The Country Liberals support the Federal Government’s investment in Homelands and Outstations and any Aboriginal Benefits Account commitment that may be put on the table.

“In addition, the Country Liberals will ensure that:

• All future Indigenous Housing works that fall within the framework of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing be administered through local organisations and councils
• $5200 is allocated per occupied dwelling on the basis it is the principal
place of residence.
• Organisations are encouraged to employ as many Aboriginal people as possible to perform repairs, maintenance and upgrades
• All children linked to Homelands and Outstations attend school and that working age people participate in the economy
• Agencies develop an asset management plan which includes setting aside funds for upgrade and replacement works which will be audited by the Territory Government
• A three stream education model is created including boarding schools in larger centres, mainstream schools and a greater role for School of the Air.

“Through housing maintenance and the creation of education pathways, I believe we can make an impact on some of the social issues affecting urban, regional and remote centres.

“The Country Liberals have committed $50million over four years to this initiative – which we believe will improve lives for all Territorians.”

Opposition Leader, Terry Mills, said the policy is a first step towards fixing remote communities and the larger centres.

“The Country Liberals want to bring about change for the better for Aboriginal people and all Territorians,” he said.

“We understand the importance of Homelands and Outstations and are committed to ensuring they remain a key part of Aboriginal life.”

(See Summary Snapshot attached)

Further comment: Adam Giles 0421 588 118