

## ***Auditor-general to investigate indigenous housing waste***

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**Source:** Senator Nigel Scullion -

The Australian Senate today requested that the Auditor-General conduct an urgent investigation of waste and mismanagement in the \$672m Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program (SIHIP).

Shadow Minister for Indigenous Affairs Nigel Scullion said he moved the notice of motion in the Senate because the Government had refused provide any substantial answers about SIHIP for months on end.

"Virtually from its inception, serious questions have been raised about the program's waste and mismanagement. The Minister's Parliamentary Secretary was the first to raise concerns but was ignored," Senator Scullion said.

"Following this early warning signal, the head of the program was sacked, the Northern Territory minister responsible demoted, and another NT Labor minister left the party in disgust.

"It is no wonder, when you consider that more than two years on, and an estimated \$170 million already spent, only seven new houses are complete along with 155 renovations which are of a questionable standard.

Yesterday the Government provided a written answer to a question about how much each house had cost to renovate: "It is not possible to disaggregate payments made to the Alliance Partner for individual communities or houses."

"It defies belief that the Government is paying out millions of dollars but has no idea what it has been spent on. It's also a serious reflection on Kevin Rudd's commitment to actually deliver on his promises to Aboriginal people," Senator Scullion said.

"I've requested this investigation because we urgently need more transparency in this program, and across the entire Indigenous Affairs portfolio, not less.

"SIHIP may not be important to a Government that is borrowing more than the program's total budget each week to feed its spending spree, but it's essential to the people that are currently living under tarps or in squalid overcrowded houses in remote communities."

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