

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory

An alliance of the CLC, NLC, CAALAS, NAAJA and AMSANT

Report details housing policy failure

Monday, 24 August, 2015

ABORIGINAL Housing NT (AHNT) has launched a report of the forum in Darwin earlier this year which identified a major housing crisis in remote Aboriginal communities.

The forum was attended by more than 150 people from across the NT, and established a new Aboriginal Housing Body, which met for the first time in Alice Springs today.

Mr Brian Pedwell, from Yarralin, who chaired today's meeting, said AHNT enabled Aboriginal people to have a strong and united voice on housing policy.

Officials from Commonwealth and Northern Territory governments attended today's meeting, and heard detailed criticisms of the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) as it applies in the NT.

The report launched today details the failings of NPARIH which were identified at the Darwin forum, and the extent of the housing crisis in remote communities. It describes the critical shortage of housing stock and lack of maintenance programs, and how jobs in construction and management have been lost.

"There remains a high level of overcrowding and there's no relief in sight of the drastic shortage of housing in Aboriginal communities," Mr Pedwell said.

The forum report also describes how public housing policies are patronising, punitive and culturally insensitive. As well, many residents don't appear to be afforded their rights under the NT Residential Tenancies Act.

"Kids need a good house to live in so that they can wake up feeling good and go off to school," Mr Pedwell said.

Mr Pedwell says AHNT wants to work with both levels of government to develop a new model of community housing, rather than Aboriginal people having to be reliant on government-controlled housing.

- To obtain a copy of the report or to interview Brian Pedwell, phone Murray McLaughlin 0429-153363