



WELCOME to the first Aboriginal Housing NT (AHNT) Committee Newsletter. Read on to see who we are and what we've been up to!

BACKGROUND - In March 2015, the **Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory (APO NT)**, with the assistance of Shelter NT and Central Australian Affordable Housing Company, facilitated the first landmark **Aboriginal Remote Housing Forum**. It brought together over 200 people, including community leaders, Aboriginal organisations, and local and international guest speakers. Together we discussed Aboriginal housing issues across the NT, the impact of poor management and housing neglect on health and social and emotional well-being, and breaches of tenancy and human rights law. We heard about the latest research and success stories in Aboriginal controlled housing in Australia and New Zealand and we agreed on some positive steps forward. Two key Forum outcomes were:

- The desire of all Aboriginal communities to **work closely with governments** to find best solutions
- The need to **form Aboriginal Housing NT (AHNT)** to provide a strong and coordinated Aboriginal voice

For the 2015 Forum Agenda click [here](#). For the published Aboriginal Housing Forum Report click [here](#).



Delegates at the First Remote Aboriginal Housing Forum 2015

Aboriginal Housing NT- (AHNT) Committee

Working to achieve a shared better vision for housing

Who are we?



Ross Williams, Rick Fletcher, Matthew Ryan, Chris Neade, Barb Shaw, Robert Hoosan & Shirleen Campbell

Current AHNT Committee Members are:

Barbara Shaw Co-Chair Alice Springs	Mathew Ryan Co-Chair Maningrida
Tony Jack Robinson River	Yananyumul Mununggurr Yirrkala
Samuel Bush-Blanasi Beswick	Chris Neade Elliott
Maxine Carlton Alice Springs	Brian Pedwell Yarralin
Ross Williams Tennant Creek	Graham Castine Katherine
Annunciata Wilson Peppimenarti	Rick Fletcher Katherine



Yananyumul and Barayuwa Mununggurr, Barb Shaw, Matthew Ryan and Ross Williams

AHNT – What we do

Housing is one of the most significant challenges confronting NT Aboriginal communities today.

Any effective housing strategies and solutions to be developed and implemented in the NT must have Aboriginal people in the lead.

AHNT has been working hard to achieve this through its objective to become an independent peak body, and to:

- Provide a **strong Aboriginal voice on housing issues** through advocacy and representation to government and the wider community
- Work with governments and other key stakeholders to address the Aboriginal housing crisis and work towards developing an **NT Aboriginal community controlled housing model**
- Engage with Aboriginal communities to **explore innovative & effective housing management models** that are appropriate and will meet the unique housing needs of the communities and homelands
- **Undertake research & policy development**
- Pursue implementation of pilot models of **new housing arrangements** in collaboration with housing providers and participating communities
- **Develop networks** and alliances with relevant professional housing entities and community leaders and housing experts



Brian Pedwell addressing the CLC Council at Haast's Bluff

AHNT Collaboration

AHNT meets regularly with APO NT staff who provide support to the AHNT Committee. We progress our housing agenda through meetings with Ministers, senior government staff, and key stakeholders. By working with APO NT we have provided a strong Aboriginal voice on housing related consultations, submissions, reviews, inquiries and the media.

We worked closely with the [Human Rights Law Centre](#) to develop a joint submission on impact of overcrowded and poor housing for the [Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the NT](#). We also wrote a joint article on Aboriginal housing that was published in February in the Sydney Morning Herald, The Canberra Times and Brisbane Times for [Close the Gap](#).

First peoples' second class treatment

In late 2015, [Australian Lawyers for Remote Aboriginal Rights](#) (ALRAR) and [Central Australian Aboriginal Legal Aid Service](#) (CAALAS) teamed up with the [Central Land Council](#) (CLC) to survey 75% of the houses in Papunya. The results showed that most houses had outstanding repairs and maintenance (R&M) issues. The majority of the emergency repairs were identified and brought to the attention of the NT Housing Department, as many were not addressed within 14 days, as set out in the Residential Tenancies Act (NT).

Around this same time, houses in Larapinta Valley Town Camp and Santa Teresa were also surveyed by ALRAR, CLC and CAALAS, which revealed similar R&M issues to Papunya.

Australian Lawyers for Remote Aboriginal Rights (ALRAR) are now representing residents from Santa Teresa at the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NTCAT) for failures in remote housing. Similarly, CAALAS are representing the Papunya and Larapinta Valley Town Camp residents at NTCAT.



House surveys in Central Australia expose many flaws in the system

The survey of houses conducted by the CLC, CAALAS and ALRAR, combined with resident feedback, exposed an inherently flawed service delivery model characterised by:

- Systemic communication barriers within the Department of Housing and their contractors
- Inadequate record keeping and management systems
- A lack of accountability and transparency

CAALAS lodged applications on behalf of selected residents from Papunya and Larapinta Valley Town Camp with the NTCAT. See our next AHNT Newsletter for more updates.

NT Homelands, Outstations and Town Camp - Special Meeting

There has been an urgent call from various service providers to address the uncertainty around the future direction and commitments from the Commonwealth and NT Government for homelands, outstations and town camps. To raise these issues with the relevant government agencies, we will be organizing a special meeting over the coming months and inviting key Aboriginal leaders and service providers to come together to work through these issues and come up with some better solutions.

There will be a special meeting of the NT **Homelands** Service providers in Darwin to discuss current issues, ongoing concerns, adequate funding, service provision, maintenance and upkeep. This is the first meeting of its kind and we encourage those involved in Homelands and **Outstations** to join us. Ongoing concerns for **Town Camps** will also be on the Agenda at our next Housing Forum.



Samuel Bush-Blanasi, Tony Jack and Wayne Wauchope

Proposed NT Aboriginal Housing Forum #2

Two years on since the inaugural APO NT Housing Forum, we have seen many changes by the past and current governments in regards to policies, programs and community engagement. We need our people and organisations to come together to reflect on where we have been and discuss how we can overcome of the main issues and challenges we face now and come up with some workable solutions to improving our unacceptable housing situation.

There is much to discuss! Some Key topics on the Housing Forum Agenda will be:

- Working towards establishing a Aboriginal Housing peak body
- Case studies of successful housing models
- Outcomes of National Aboriginal Housing Review and the NT Govt. Housing and Town Camp Reviews
- The current and proposed NTG Housing Programs – Homebuild NT and other housing and homeland programs
- How much funding is coming into the NT and where is it going
- Latest research/ evidence to inform our next steps
- Social Determinants of health & housing
- Developing an agreement on the key issues that we can present to both governments and other key stakeholders – Production of a final report

The AHNT Committee will share their successes and challenges over the past two years and we want you to share yours. Together we will map out our next steps to reshape and improve the housing road ahead.

Watch this Space
for more updates
on the forum



UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES COMES TO DARWIN

The United Nations Special Rapporteur, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz visited Darwin on 23rd March. During her visit, Ms. Tauli-Corpuz addressed a number of diverse issues including Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) and its successor Stronger Futures & legislation measures and policies adopted to reduce indigenous disadvantage, the administration of justice and detention conditions, land rights and native title, prevention of violence against women and the rate of children removed from their homes by officials.



Helen Fejo-Frith (Bagot), Bernie Valadian (ADF), Darryl Tambling (PIV) and Victoria Tauli-Corpuz (UN)

Ms Tauli-Corpuz met with APO NT and other Aboriginal organisations, including Larrakia Nation and met with leaders at the Palmerston Indigenous Village (PIV) and went on a short drive through One Mile Dam. APO NT and some other organisations have provided briefing papers to further highlight the issues we face in the Northern Territory. A comment she did say was that *she was surprised by the living conditions of our people, she could understand if she was in the Philippines (where Victoria is from) but this was AUSTRALIA!*



Ms Victoria Tauli-Corpuz meeting with APO NT and other Aboriginal organisations

Some Key Public Housing Contacts:

If you have an emergency contact your local contractor immediately. For tenancy issues or repairs and maintenance, you need to contact your local housing contractor. If you cannot get through to them, contact the Department of Housing

Arnhem Region
08 89870479

Barkly Region
08 8962 4537

Big Rivers Region
08 8973 8519

Central Australia
08 8951 5674

Darwin & Batchelor
1800 104 076

The AHNT Committee would like to hear from you if you have any housing stories. Drop us

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AHNT Meeting March 2017 - David Cooper, Yananymul Mununggurr, Danielle Cooper, Louise Weber, Matthew Ryan, Senator Malarnderrri McCarthy, Barb Shaw, Wes Miller, Barayuwa Mununggurr, Theresa Roe, Ross Williams, Aimon Riyana and Brionee Noonan