

Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory

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

NT Aboriginal Organisations Welcome Homelands Support

29 March 2012

The NT Aboriginal Peak Organisations (APO NT) have welcomed the Australian Government's commitment of \$206 million over 10 years for homelands.

Homelands and outstations are vital for maintaining traditional links to country, and evidence shows that living on homelands is associated with better health and well being outcomes and reduced social problems.

"The announcement today demonstrates that the Australian Government has not abandoned homelands in favour of larger communities, and this news will be a great relief to many Aboriginal people in the bush," the CEO of the NLC, Mr Hill said.

CEO of AMSANT, Mr Paterson said it is profoundly significant that the funding has been provided over a ten-year period.

"Long term resourcing has been the desire of Aboriginal people throughout the nation for at least four decades because of the uncertainty and disruption caused by the short term funding contracts."

"Short term funding allows for no serious planning or continuity of programming which is critical to success."

"For the first time we are seeing the Australian government invest in indigenous programs that will match the intergenerational time scales of Closing the Gap," Mr Paterson said.

Mr Hill said it was a good investment. "Twenty million a year is not enough money, but it is a good start, and we now call on the NT Government to step up to the plate and increase their contribution of \$15 million. APO NT also expects greater transparency and accountability regarding the allocation and outcomes of this funding than has been the case over the past five years."

APO NT has been working with local Aboriginal organisations to develop new models for ensuring the sustainability of homelands and outstations. We urge both levels of government to work with APO NT to consider innovative approaches to supporting these small remote places, including through:

- the provision of housing and housing maintenance services on homelands;
- supporting the APO NT model for remote employment and participation based on employment rather than welfare;
- strategies for encouraging the development of social enterprises, and realistic economic development initiatives;
- the provision of vital health and education services.

APO NT said it expected that Aboriginal people in the bush will be heartened by the announcement.

Interviews/information contact: David Cooper (for John Paterson) 0418 486 310

Roanna Edwards (for Kim Hill) 0458 305 355