

NT ABORIGINAL HOUSING FORUM 2018

GOOD HOUSING STARTS WITH COMMUNITY CONTROL

MEDIA RELEASE

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Aboriginal delegates at the Northern Territory Aboriginal Housing Forum have welcomed the Chief Minister's support for the development of an Aboriginal community-controlled peak housing body for the NT.

Around 190 delegates travelled to Darwin for the NT Aboriginal Housing Forum from across the Territory and the nation, including from many remote areas, to discuss the issues of Aboriginal housing in the NT.

Chief Minister Michael Gunner addressed the Forum on Thursday 8 March in what was seen as a positive and productive dialogue.

Co-chair of Aboriginal Housing NT (AHNT) Barbara Shaw said: "The support from the Chief Minister Michael Gunner means we are now one step closer to establishing an Aboriginal community controlled peak housing body, however this will require adequate funding and support."

Delegates are also seeking clarity from the Australian Government on what will happen to funding from 1 July 2018, when the Commonwealth National Partnership Agreement on Remote Housing (NPARH) is set to cease. The Forum called on the Australian Government to shoulder its responsibility to funding remote Aboriginal housing on a needs basis. The Commonwealth appears to be walking away from commitments made by successive Commonwealth governments over the past 40 years.

"Without resolution, remote and regional Aboriginal communities face significant risk of uncertain housing service provision," Ms Shaw said.

The Forum recognised the inequity in current policies relating to remote and regional Aboriginal communities, homelands, outstations and town camps, and called for consistency in funding that recognises these different community contexts.

The Northern Territory is unique in its demographics with more than 30% of its population being Aboriginal, 80% of whom live in remote areas. Aboriginal families account for 100% of remote tenancies and 50% of urban tenancies.

"With a young and fast growing population, we urgently need to address the intergenerational housing inequity that successive governments have failed to address," said Ms Shaw.

“We know that housing is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of our families and communities and to outcomes in education, employment and community sustainability,” said Ms Shaw.

“The shift to a public housing model has seen reduced control and loss of Aboriginal employment and no improvement in achieving the Closing the Gap targets.

“We want to see the NT Government work collaboratively with AHNT and Aboriginal Peak Organisations Northern Territory (APO NT) to develop regional and local housing models, with a plan to return control of all housing functions in a staged approach to Aboriginal community-controlled organisations.”

For Media Comment:

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