

Media release

Thursday 5 July 2018

Federal Government must renew investment in remote housing

It is now July 2018. The National Partnership on Remote Housing is officially over. This is not good enough.

The National COSS (Council of Social Service) Network and National Shelter are calling for action from Federal and State Governments to renew their partnership to fund essential housing in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Housing investment has been linked to an improvement in mental and physical health and school attendance, and a decrease in family and domestic violence and youth offending in remote communities.

“These outcomes are essential to the future of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Without proper investment and a true partnership between the State and the Federal Government, these communities are being let down. Governments must not walk away from their commitments,” said Dr Jennie Gray, Deputy CEO, WACOSS.

“We are all calling for national leadership on this issue.” said Edwina McDonald, Acting CEO, ACOSS. “We need a commitment from the Federal Government to enter a new long-term funding partnership with the states to ensure these communities do not miss out this critical infrastructure.”

“Access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing is essential if we are to close the gap in life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A new partnership between governments is needed to deliver the required investment for the next decade”, said Mark Henley, CEO, QCOSS.

The collective is calling on the Federal Government to invest in a recurrent program with the States, to fund and maintain new and existing houses, preserve the functionality of the buildings, and increase the life of the housing assets.

The Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has set endorsed targets to address Indigenous disadvantage across Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory, and Queensland. \$550 million has been committed through the Federal Budget in May 2018 to support remote housing in the Northern Territory.

“While the commitment to the NT is an excellent start, the Federal Government has neglected the rest of the country,” said Adrian Pisarski, CEO, National Shelter.

The COSS network, and National Shelter are calling on the Federal Government to immediately take action to make a new commitment, to meet the needs of those communities that need it most.

Ends

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